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OATH, CURSE, AND BLESSING

AND OTHER STUDIES IN ORIGINS

BY

ERNEST CRAWLEY

EDITED BY

THEODORE BESTERMAN



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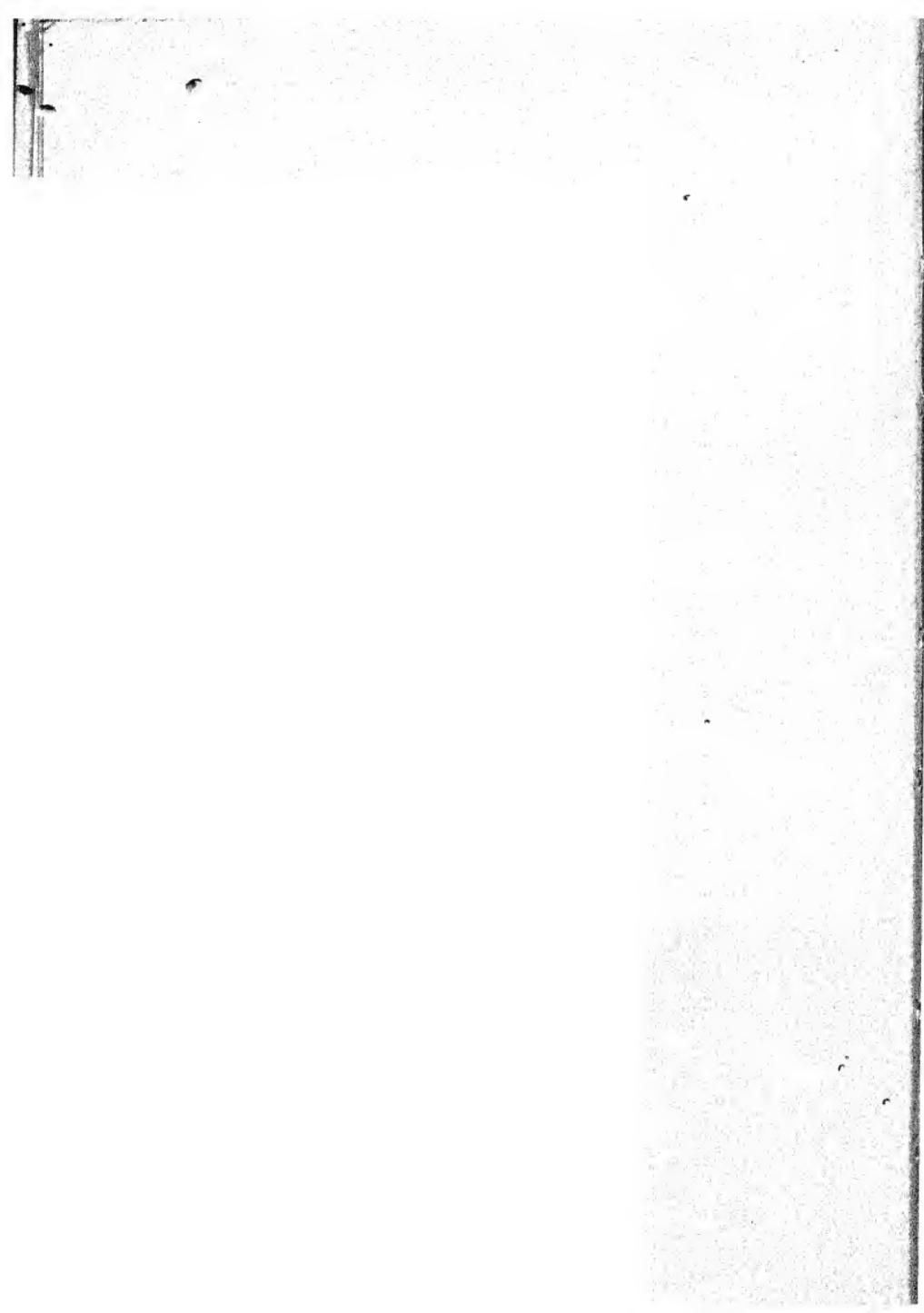
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FOREWORD

FOLLOWING on my revised edition of Ernest Crawley's masterpiece *The Mystic Rose* (which has since been made available at a very low price by the enterprise of the Rationalist Press Association), I edited two volumes of Crawley's shorter studies in social anthropology. These two volumes, *Studies of Savages and Sex* and *Dress, Drinks, and Drums: Further Studies of Savages and Sex*, published respectively in 1929 and 1931, finally established Ernest Crawley's reputation as that of one of the most acute and original anthropological thinkers of our time. The Rationalist Press Association have consequently thought it right to include in the Thinker's Library a selection of some of the best essays and studies in the two volumes just mentioned. It is my firm conviction that the more widely Ernest Crawley's writings are read, the more clearly it will be seen how unjust was the neglect from which he suffered during his lifetime, like so many thinkers who have the good fortune for us, but the misfortune for themselves, to be ahead of their time and generation.

TH. B.



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I

THE OATH, THE CURSE, AND THE BLESSING

i. The Curse and the Blessing

i. INTRODUCTORY

CURSING and blessing are perfect opposites, and are therefore appropriately taken together for analysis and description. The preponderance of evil-wishing over good-wishing is obvious, but deserves consideration. Like the preponderance of evil spirits over good spirits in early religions, it points to absence of harmony or failure of adaptation in the relations of man to Nature and of man to man. But this very defect may be a condition of progress, a mark of the struggle.

The habit, in its twofold or polar aspect, is universal both in ordinary social life and in religion, organized and unorganized. It transcends all distinctions of race, and is, in fact, a permanent outcome of the working together of language and thought; for by this double mechanism are expressed wish and will, desire and determination, in that which is, as it were, midway between psychosis and action. This does not imply that verbal utterance is a stage preceding action; we describe it as intermediate, just because cursing and blessing in their earlier forms have the appearance of being based on an unconscious theory that the word is nearer the end than is the wish, and that the act alone reaches, or rather is, the end. It follows that, in the fluid state of categorical thought which we assume for early culture it would be both easy and natural to *assimilate* the spoken wish to the realized fact, by any appropriate means. Such arti-

ficial actualizing of the blessing or the curse is typical of all except the higher stages of the evolution. It will be illustrated later on. In passing, we may note that to describe such assimilation as a "material" or "concrete" tendency, or to describe the primitive mind as being essentially "materialistic," is to draw a false distinction. In view of the very rudimentary analysis of natural laws and of mental categories arrived at by early man, it is better to describe his mental operations by some such term as *holopsychosis*, or "whole-thinking," just as his language has been described as *holophrastic*.¹ All the components are there, but they have not yet been resolved. The examples cited below will illustrate this also, besides serving to indicate that some of the earliest cases of human "expression" are actually less material and less concrete than the latest.

The curse and the blessing are an excellent example of a product of the two powers—thought and word (or *logos*)—and of the inhibition of such a product from becoming fact. The reasons for the inhibition need no description; they are, however, the defining conditions of the curse or blessing as such, though these conditions are always, as it were, about to be transcended. This result is most conspicuous at the highest point of the curve traced by the general habit, and corresponding to a stage when words, as such, possess more *moment* than they do either before or after. As distinguished from desire on the one hand, and from actualization (in artificial embodiment) on the other, the curse or the blessing *is* the spoken word. We may well suppose that the ascription to words of such superverbal potency as a typical curse involves coincides with a period of mental evolution, and of linguistic evolution, when man became at last completely conscious of the "power of speech," of the faculty which he had so laboriously acquired.

¹ [As by Daniel Wilson, *Prehistoric Man* (Cambridge, 1862), i. 12; third edition (London, 1876), i. 13.]

Then the word was *res*, not *nomen*. The arrival at such a point of realization amounts to a crystallizing out of at least one important category from the primal fluid of nervous life. It will be noticed that, if terms like "concrete" and "material" are employed, we must admit that the half-civilized and highly organized Moor is more "primitive" than the lowest savage.

It also seems to us an unnecessary and illegitimate proceeding to draw a sharp division between the magical and the religious blessing or curse, or to assign priority to the former type. A savage Australian may curse his fellow mentally or verbally, in a form as far removed from magic as profane swearing among civilized men is from religion. Or, again, if he has a god, he may invoke him to execute his spoken wish. On the other hand, we find the higher religions frequently adopting a magical form; and we can sometimes trace the religious form passing into the magical. The distinction, in fact, between magic and religion, as the *form* of man's relation to his environment, seems to be a matter of temperament rather than of time. Two types certainly exist for cursing and blessing, and they will be fully discussed below; here it is premised that we have no right to assume the priority of the magical type, or even its exclusion, simultaneously, of the religious. There are, moreover, many neutral cases.

2. GENERAL CHARACTER

A curse or blessing is a wish, expressed in words, that evil or good may befall a certain person. The wish may be expressed by a god or spirit, in which case it is a *fiat*, and is wish, will, and fact in one. It may be expressed for the speaker's own good or ill. It may be, again, a mere wish or will; or an appeal to another (usually a supernatural) person to execute it; or accompanied by, or embodied in, a material

object. This may be an image of the result desired; a vehicle of transmission; an object representing the curse or the blessing; or a physical action by the speaker to or towards the intended person.

For the uttered wish without condition, reference, or assimilative action, we may compare the case vividly described by Turner. The Samoan has a system of organized cursing, but at times he resorts to the natural method, and curses on his own responsibility. Discovering a theft from his garden, he shouts in a loud voice, "May fire blast the eyes of the person who has stolen my bananas!" The cry "rang throughout the adjacent plantations, and made the thief tremble. They dreaded such uttered imprecations."¹ In Luang-Sermata, usual curses are: "Evil shall devour you! lightning shall strike you!" and so on.² Such is the type of the simple curse or blessing found in all races, and surviving belief in magic and in supernatural sanctions among the unthinking members of the highest civilization.

When accompanied by a material vehicle or embodiment or action, assimilative or assisting or symbolic, the adhesions of the wish become innumerable, for it links itself to the phenomena of every form of taboo, magic, and symbolism. At the back of all these there is the primary connexion with neuromuscular discharge. Here the wish may be simultaneous with, or subsequent to, the impulsive action, just as will may be not prior to, but accompanying or following, an action of which it is the cerebral echo.

In Melanesia the act of blessing involves the bestowal of *mana* by physical contact. A man will give a boy a start in the world by placing his hand on the boy's head, thus imparting to him a portion

¹ G. Turner, *Samoa a Hundred Years ago and long before* (London, 1884), p. 184.

² J. G. F. Riedel, *De sluik- en kroesharige rassen tusschen Celebes en Papua* ('s Gravenhage, 1886), p. 317.

of his own mysterious power.¹ In the Solomon Islands inland people are supposed to have more *mana* than coast people. When they go down to the coast they considerably avoid spreading out their fingers, for to point the fingers at a man is to shoot him with a "charm."² Blessing among the Masai consists of spitting upon the recipient.³ Far more common is the use of this vehicle for the curse, or as a symbol of contempt or insult.⁴ So the Masai spat while cursing. "If a man while cursing spits in his enemy's eyes, blindness is supposed to follow."⁵ The Sakai are believed to be able to do injury by "sendings" and "pointings."⁶ Among the Fiort of West Africa, a sale of property becomes complete when the seller has "blessed" the article sold. He raises his hands to his arm-pits, and throws them out towards the buyer. Then he breathes or blows over the article. This ceremony is called *ku vana mula*, "giving the breath," and is equivalent, says Dennett, to a "God bless thee."⁷ It seems rather to be a personal imposition of the speaker's good-will upon both buyer and thing bought, without any supernatural reference. There is here as yet no symbolism: the intention is immediate. Examples of symbolism might be multiplied indefinitely. The shaking off of the dust of the feet is a familiar case. In Morocco a suppliant at the *sīyid* of a saint will call down misfortune upon an enemy by sweeping the floor with his cloak, praying that the enemy may be swept like-

¹ R. H. Codrington, "Religious Beliefs and Practices in Melanesia," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute* (London, 1881), x. 285.

² *Ibid.*, x. 303.

³ J. Thomson, *Through Masai Land* (London, 1887), pp. 165 *et seq.*

⁴ J. G. F. Riedel, *op. cit.*, pp. 259, 295, 406.

⁵ S. L. and H. Hinde, *The Last of the Masai* (London, 1901), p. 48.

⁶ W. W. Skeat and C. O. Blagden, *Pagan Races of the Malay Peninsula* (London, 1906), ii. 199.

⁷ R. E. Dennett, *At the Back of the Black Man's Mind* (London, 1906), p. 48.

wise.¹ It is hardly necessary to point out that mere impulsive action, deliberate magic, and symbolism shade into each other continually.

Among the Hebrews a blessing was imparted by the imposition of hands.² In blessing a multitude, the hands were uplifted.³ Refinements are inevitable: thus, in the Greek Church the gesture of benediction is made with the right hand, the thumb touching the tip of the ring-finger, the other fingers being erected. In the Latin use, the thumb, fore, and middle fingers are erected, the others being doubled on the palm of the hand. In the Rabbinical blessing, the priest places the fingers of both hands in pairs—the forefinger with the middle, the ring with the little finger, the tips of the thumbs, and the tips of the forefingers, respectively, touching one another: thus the ten fingers are in six divisions.

Other components of the wish, as it becomes a rite, may also undergo differentiation. Thus the Talmud holds that the mere power of the spoken word is efficacious.⁴ The priest pronounces the blessing in a loud voice. So, in Islām, an important detail is the audibleness of the benediction. The Talmud also speaks of cursing by an angry look. This needs to be fixed. Such a curse has been described as a "mental curse."⁵ The *Yasits* have a remarkable dualistic personification—"the cursing thought" of the Law of Mazda; the "strong cursing thought of the wise man, opposing foes in the shape of a boar, or sharp-toothed he-boar, a sharp-jawed boar, that kills at one stroke, pursuing, wrathful, with a dripping face, strong and swift to run, and rushing all

¹ E. A. Westermarck, "L-'Ār, or the Transference of Conditional Curses in Morocco," *Anthropological Essays presented to Edward Burnett Tylor* (Oxford, 1907), p. 371.

² Genesis xlviii. 17; Matthew xix. 13.

³ Leviticus ix. 22; Luke xxiv. 50.

⁴ *Talmud*: *Zērā'im*: *Bērākhōth*, 19a, 56a.

⁵ C. Levias, "Cursing," *The Jewish Encyclopedia* (New York and London, 1925), iv. 390.

around." On the other hand is the personification of the "pious and good Blessing." This Blessing (*âfriti*) is twofold—by thought and by words. It is notable that the blessing by words is the more powerful; but the curse (*upamana*) by thought is more powerful than that by words.¹

The indeterminate character of primitive thought makes interchange easy between thought, idea, word, and act, and also between mechanical, psychical, and verbal force. Thus a curse or blessing may be regarded now as a spirit, now as a thing, now as a word, but in each case it is regarded as travelling along a material or psychical conductor, or as embodied in a material object, its energy then being potential, ready to become kinetic when discharged. It is important to note that these early views are held in comparatively late culture, especially in religion, and these show every sign of being living beliefs, not survivals.

When we remember the emphasis laid in all but the latest culture on words and names we can appreciate the confusion, or rather the shifting, between the material and the verbal notion of a curse or blessing. Thus, in whatever form it is expressed, the curse or blessing, like all expressions of an idea enforced by strong emotion, has a dynamical certainty. Irish folk-lore has it that a curse once uttered must alight on something; it will float in the air seven years, and may descend any moment on the party it was aimed at; if his guardian angel but forsake him, it takes forthwith the shape of some misfortune, sickness, or temptation, and strikes his devoted head.²

"Curses" in old Teutonic proverbs "operate quickly"; they are "not to be turned aside."³

¹ *Zend-Avesta: Sirôzah*, i. 30; *Yast X. xxxi.* 127.

² W. G. W. Martin, *Traces of the Elder Faiths of Ireland* (London, 1902), ii. 57-58.

³ J. Grimm, *Teutonic Mythology* (London, 1880-1888), iv. 1690.

What Grimm describes as the "savage heartiness" of the curses which he records is the emotional force which has so much to do with making an impression, whether in the direction of "suggestion" to the victim or, generally, of the ascription of "power" to the word or act. Emotional force as a factor in the making both of magic and of religion deserves recognition. It is well illustrated by blessings and cursings in their growth; when their forms are fixed, naturally the form is everything, and a curse uttered casually and without heat may still be efficacious. To the priestly blessing in the synagogue magical powers were ascribed, and the Old Testament states that the word once pronounced is irrevocable.¹ The Talmud warns against looking at the priest while he is pronouncing the blessing, for "the glory of God is on him." It is a natural process of suggestion working through strength of emotion, fear of ill-will and enmity, and reinforced by a complex of associated ideas relating to the essence of words and the energy of souls, that gives to the curse or blessing its independent "power." As it is put by Westermarck, this "purely magic power, independent of any superhuman will . . . is rooted in the close association between the wish, more particularly the spoken wish, and the idea of its fulfilment. The wish is looked upon in the light of energy which may be transferred—by material contact, or by the eye, or by means of speech—to the person concerned, and then becomes a fact. This process, however, is not taken quite as a matter of course; there is always some mystery about it."²

Just as sin is "looked upon as a substance charged with injurious energy," so the curse is a "baneful substance,"³ like the materially conceived *badi* of

¹ Genesis xxvii. 35.

² E. A. Westermarck, *The Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas* (London, 1912-1917), i. 563.

³ *Ibid.*, i. 55, 57.

the Malays, and the *libas* of the Moors. Good and evil in all but the higher stages of thought are constantly "embodied," either by analogy, personification, or the much more normal and prevalent mode of mere mental objectification. To illustrate this last we may compare the precisely identical method, used in science, of *conceiving* of a force as a graphic straight line.

This conception is characteristic of the curse and blessing in their social and religious history. Arabs when being cursed will lie on the ground that the curse may fly over them.¹ Among the Nandi, "if a son refuses to obey his father in any serious matter, the father solemnly strikes the son with his fur mantle—this is equivalent to a most serious curse, and is supposed to be fatal to the son unless he obtains forgiveness, which he can do only by sacrificing a goat before his father."² Berbers strip before taking an oath, to prevent it from clinging to their clothes.³ Plato speaks of being "tainted by a curse."⁴ Arabs fear the "magical nature" of an oath.⁵ The "water of jealousy" was believed by the Hebrews, as causing a curse, to go into the bowels, to make the belly to swell, and the thigh to rot.⁶ The Kachinzes "bless" their huts by sprinkling them with milk.⁷ The Nubians, before eating the tongue of an animal, cut off the tip, believing that "here is the seat of all curses and evil wishes."⁸ Among the islanders of Leti, Moa, and Lakor, a man who

¹ I. Goldziher, *Abhandlungen zur arabischen Philologie* (Leiden, 1896), i. 29.

² Sir H. H. Johnston, *The Uganda Protectorate* (London, 1902), ii. 879.

³ E. A. Westermarck, *op. cit.*, i. 59.

⁴ Plato, *Laws*, ix. 881.

⁵ J. L. Burckhardt, *Notes on the Bedouins and Wahabys* (London, 1830), p. 73.

⁶ Numbers v. 11 *et seq.*

⁷ J. G. Georgi, *Russia* (London, 1780-1783), iii. 275.

⁸ G. Schweinfurth, *The Heart of Africa* (London, 1873), ii. 326-327.

has quarrelled with a woman is afraid to go to war lest her curses may bring death.¹

Hence the recipient of a curse is anxious to neutralize or divert it. In the last case cited the man is at pains to secure forgiveness by making presents to the woman. In Melanesia the curse is an engine of authority. A chief will curse a man by way of a legal " injunction "; the matter is put right by the method of *toto*, the offering of a gift. On receiving this the chief sacrifices to the spirit, *lio'a*, on whose power his curse rested.² In Samoa there is the same system, particularly for the enforcement of the rights of property. In case of theft the injured party gives the priest a fee of mats. The priest curses the thief; the latter, to avoid the otherwise inevitable result of sickness or death, deposits at the door of the priest an equivalent for the stolen property. Then the priest prays over " the death bowl " that the curse may be " reversed."³ The Maoris employed an elaborate ritual for cursing and its reversal. The latter was *whakahokitu*; the *tohunga* employed to counteract the curse chanted a *karakia* containing such words as these :

" Great curse, long curse,
Great curse, binding curse,
Come hither, sacred spell !
Cause the curser to lie low
In gloomy night ! "⁴

The Todas have a curious ceremony for anticipating mischief to the sacred cattle. The point of the rite is that the assistant in the dairy, the *kalt-*

¹ J. G. F. Riedel, *De sluik- en kroesharige rassen tusschen Selebes en Papua* ('s Gravenhage, 1886), p. 387.

² R. H. Codrington, *The Melanesians* (Oxford, 1891), p. 216.

³ G. Turner, *Samoa a Hundred Years ago and long before* (London, 1884), p. 30.

⁴ E. Shortland, *Maori Religion and Mythology* (London and Auckland, 1852), p. 35.

mokh, is cursed and then the curse is at once removed. The dairy-priest, the *palol*, pours milk and clarified butter into the outstretched hands of the *kalmokh*, who rubs it over his head and whole body. The *palol* chants a curse: "Die may he; tiger catch him; snake bite him; steep hill fall down on him; river fall on him; wild boar bite him!" etc. Rivers infers "that the *kalmokh* is being made responsible for any offence which may have been committed against the dairies. . . . The *kalmokh* having been cursed, and so made responsible, the curse is then removed in order to avoid the evil consequences which would befall the boy if this were not done."¹ Toda sorcerers impose diseases by cursing-spells, and remove them with some such formula as, "May this be well; disease leave!"² Thus a blessing may neutralize a curse. Micah's mother cursed her son for his theft; when he confessed she rendered his curse ineffective by a blessing.³

Blessings and curses are capable both of descent and of ascent genealogically. Thus, we find it stated in the Apocrypha that the "scourge shall not depart from his house";⁴ and in the Old Testament a "just man that walketh in his integrity, blessed are his children after him."⁵ The Basutos appear to have the belief in the descent of the curse; Casalis compares it with the case of Noah and Ham.⁶ The Greek conception of the Erinyes laid stress on this; a curse might work down to the grandchildren, and even utterly extirpate a race.⁷ Among the Maoris, "to bid you go and cook your father would be a great curse, but to tell a person to go and cook his

¹ W. H. R. Rivers, *The Todas* (London, 1906), pp. 138 *et seq.*

² W. H. R. Rivers, *The Todas* (London, 1906), p. 260.

³ Judges xvii. 2.

⁴ Sirach xxiii. 11.

⁵ Proverbs xx. 7.

⁶ E. Casalis, *The Basutos* (London, 1861), p. 305.

⁷ Æschylus, *Eumenides*, 934 *et seq.*; Herodotus, vi. 86 (the case of Glaucus and his family).

great-grandfather would be far worse, because it included every individual who has sprung from him.”¹

The energy of a curse may spread. As Irish folklore puts it, it “must alight on something.”² Plato speaks of it as tainting everything with which it comes into contact.³ The Bedouin will not take an oath within or near the camp, “because the magical nature of the oath might prove pernicious to the general body of Arabs, were it to take place in their vicinity.”⁴ The Moors hold that it is “bad even to be present when an oath is taken.”⁵

A remarkable detail is very commonly found—namely, that a curse may return to the man who uttered it. “Curses, like chickens, come home to roost”; “they turn home as birds to their nest.”⁶ The Karens have a story to the following effect: “There was a man who had ten children, and he cursed one of his brethren, who had done him no injury; but the curse returned to the man who sent it, and all his ten children died.”⁷ Here there is a moral valuation, but the earlier non-moral conception of the intrinsic energy of the curse constitutes the point of the story. With it may be compared the Roman notion that certain imprecations were so awful that even the utterer suffered as well as his victim.⁸

¹ R. Taylor, *Te Ika a Maui*² (London, 1870), p. 94.

² W. G. W. Martin, *Traces of the Elder Faiths of Ireland* (London, 1902), ii. 57.

³ Plato, *Laws*, ix. 881.

⁴ J. L. Burckhardt, *Notes on the Bedouins and Wahabys* (London, 1830), p. 73.

⁵ E. A. Westermarck, *The Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas*² (London, 1912-1917), i. 59.

⁶ J. Grimm, *Teutonic Mythology* (London, 1880-1888), iv. 1690.

⁷ F. Mason, “On Dwellings, Works of Art, Laws, etc., of the Karens,” *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* (Calcutta, 1868), XXXVII. ii. 137.

⁸ Plutarch, *Vita Crassi*, 16.

As with the force of taboo and similar conceptions, physical contact is the most efficacious means of "transmission." If we regard the curse or blessing as being the mental idea of a desired material result, then, like all ideas in an impulsive brain, it produces motor energy in the form both of words and of action. Thus, besides the uttered form, we have, by association, paths of realization by means of sympathetic or symbolic action. Examples have been cited of such "assisting" of the wish, by gestures, direct or indirect. We have also, by association, the more highly differentiated method of sympathetic or symbolic creation. A material model or symbol of the result is desired as a pre-embodiment of it; later this becomes a cause and a guarantee of the result. The simplest form of this method is the use of the "wax image." In this, model and symbol shade into one another. The image represents the recipient, and the utterer of the wish either utters it over the image, or works upon the image the material result wished for.

So far, we have cases in which the curse or blessing preserves its mental or verbal character, "mental" being taken to include artistic materialization, as in sympathetic magic. For the curse or blessing, as such, is distinguished from physical injury or physical benefit precisely because it stays short of physical action by the subject upon the object. But the two were bound to be combined; the mixed type of curse and blessing is as common as the pure, and in certain stages of culture is considered to be the more efficacious. The bestowal of a blessing is more efficacious when the man who confers it touches the man who receives it. When dealing with "vehicles" and "media" of curses and blessings, we are not entitled to suppose that even in their highest development the mind is conscious of a process of "conduction." To us it appears obvious that, when a suppliant holds one end of a string to the other end of which

is attached his protector, each should regard the string as a bridge or a wire for transmission. But it would be more logical to credit them with a correct, than an incorrect, application of a physical law, and to argue that they consider will to be conducted by any part of the ether rather than by the wire. It seems more consistent with the evidence to regard these "conductors" as being merely the nearest thing to physical contact. The sense of touch is bound up with all direct physical action upon an object, well-doing and ill-doing, and colours all ideas of it. Similarly, when we read of curses acting at a distance—in the case of the Australian sorcerer at a hundred miles—we are not entitled to credit the belief with a reasoned or even unconscious substratum of a quasi-scientific theory of the velocity and displacement of an imprecatory particle. It is quite possible that in the case of "conductors" of various magical "forces," such as food and drink, we have to deal as much with the associational idea of *property* as with that of kinship, or of contagion. With this proviso, such metaphors may be employed. Westermarck writes: "The efficacy of a wish or a curse depends not only upon the potency which it possesses from the beginning, owing to certain qualities in the person from whom it originates, but also on the vehicle by which it is conducted—just as the strength of an electric shock depends both on the original intensity of the current and on the condition of the conductor. As particularly efficient conductors are regarded blood, bodily contact, food, and drink."¹

As early types of the ideas referred to above, which are connected with that of the fulfilment of a wish, we may cite the following. A Maori would say to a stone: "If this were your [his enemy's] brain, how very sweet would be my eating of it." Or he might call any object by the name of his enemy, and then proceed to strike or insult it. This

¹ E. A. Westermarck, *op. cit.*, i. 586.

process was a "curse," *tapa tapa*, or *tuku tuku*.¹ Here is the material for the development of the image-method and the symbol-method. In the Toda curse the recipient apparently has it rubbed into his body with milk and butter. It is quite legitimate to regard this as a case where the sound and the breath "touch" the food, and hence the recipient. The Moor transmits his "conditional curse" to the man appealed to for protection by grasping him with his hands, or by touching him with his turban or a fold of his dress, even by grasping his child or his horse. "In short, he establishes some kind of contact with the other person."² Psychologically it is a case of prolepsis rather than the conduction of a curse whose fulfilment is only contingent. Similarly the Moorish suppliant may slay an animal at the door of the man. If the latter steps over the blood, or merely sees it, he incurs a conditional curse. Such a curse may be involved in the food eaten at a meal to seal a compact. The phrase runs that "the food will repay" him who breaks it. The eaten food "embodies a conditional curse."³ Conversely, for, as Westermarck puts it, "the magic wire may conduct imprecations in either direction," if a Moor gives food or drink to another, "it is considered dangerous, not only for the recipient to receive it without saying 'In the name of God,' but also for the giver to give it without uttering the same formula by way of precaution."⁴ In the case of a stranger receiving milk, it is held that, should he misbehave, "the drink would cause his knees to swell."⁵

On similar principles a curse may be applied to something that has belonged to the recipient, or to something that may come in his way. The aborigines of Victoria "believe that if an enemy gets possession

¹ R. Taylor, *Te Ika a Maui*² (London, 1870), p. 94.

² E. A. Westermarck, *The Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas*² (London, 1912-1917), i. 586.

³ *Ibid.*, i. 587.

⁴ *Ibid.*, i. 590.

⁵ *Ibid.*, i. 590.

of anything that has belonged to them, even such things as bones of animals which they have eaten, broken weapons, feathers, portions of dress, pieces of skin, or refuse of any kind, he can employ it as a charm to produce illness in the person to whom it belonged. They are, therefore, very careful to burn up all rubbish or uncleanness before leaving a camping-place. Should anything belonging to an unfriendly tribe be found at any time, it is given to the chief, who preserves it as a means of injuring the enemy. This *wuulon* is lent to any one of the tribe who wishes to vent his spite against anyone belonging to the unfriendly tribe. When used as a charm, the *wuulon* is rubbed over with emu fat, mixed with red clay, and tied to the point of a spear-thrower, which is stuck upright in the ground before the camp-fire. The company sit round watching it, but at such a distance that their shadows cannot fall on it. They keep chanting imprecations on the enemy till the spear-thrower turns round and falls in his direction.¹ This example contains in solution a good many of the principles connected with cursing.

There is also the buried curse. In Tenimber one can make a man ill by burying in his path such objects as sharp stones or thorns, uttering a curse during the burial. These articles are extracted later from the victim's body by the surgeon.² In the neighbouring islands of Leti, Moa, and Lakor, the buried articles are pieces of *sirih* from the victim's own body, or a scrap of his hair. The cursing accompanies the burial, but there is no need to place the "embodied curse" in the man's path. Burial is enough, for here the object buried is a part of the man.³

Thus we come back to the symbolized result.

¹ J. Dawson, *Australian Aborigines* (Melbourne, 1881), p. 54.

² J. G. F. Riedel, *De sluik- en kroesharige rassen tusschen Selebes en Papua* ('s Gravenhage, 1886), p. 304.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 377.

Again, in connexion with taboo upon property, Codrington observes that in Melanesia "a *tambu* approaches to a curse, when it is a prohibition resting on the invocation of an unseen power," that, namely, of the *tindalo*.¹ In Ceram a trespasser incurs the sickness wished or determined by the owner who embodied it in a taboo-mark.² In Samoa the "silent hieroglyphic taboo," or *tapui*, contains a curse; thus, the white shark taboo, a coco-palm leaf cut to represent a shark, contains the wish, "May the thief be eaten by a white shark!"³

Even before the ethical stage of the curse and blessing is reached, their force varies, chiefly according to the character of the wisher. There is, of course, to begin with, the mere "power of the word" or of the wish; and the curse of anyone, "however ignorant" he may be, is not to be disregarded.⁴ But, as a rule, superiority of personal power or position increases the power of the blessing or the curse. Among the Tongans the curses of a superior possessed great efficacy; "if the party who curses is considerably lower in rank than the party cursed," the curse had no effect.⁵ "Without any dispute the less is blessed of the better."⁶ The principle of the *whakahokitu* ceremony of the Maoris is that a curse will yield to the *mana* of a man who can summon a more powerful *atua* than that of the original curser.⁷

The importance and influence of parents, especially of the father, have an enormous effect. The Nandi regard a father's curse as being "most serious."⁸

¹ R. H. Codrington, *The Melanesians* (Oxford, 1891), p. 216. ² J. G. F. Riedel, *op. cit.*, p. 140.

³ G. Turner, *Samoa a Hundred Years ago and long before* (London, 1884), p. 185. ⁴ *Megilla*, 15a.

⁵ W. Mariner, *An Account of the Natives of the Tonga Islands* (London, 1817), ii. 238. ⁶ *Hebews* vii. 7.

⁷ E. Shortland, *Maori Religion and Mythology* (London, 1882), p. 75.

⁸ Sir H. H. Johnston, *The Uganda Protectorate* (London, 1902), ii. 879.

Among the Mpongwe "there is nothing which a young person so much deprecates as the curse of an aged person, and especially that of a revered father."¹ The Moorish proverb has it that "if the saints curse you the parents will cure you, but if the parents curse you the saints will not cure you."² The Hebrew belief in the inevitable efficacy of a father's blessing or curse was remarkable. The blessing was regarded as an invaluable heritage. "In deed and word honour thy father, that a blessing may come upon thee from him. For the blessing of the father establisheth the houses of children; but the curse of the mother rooteth out the foundations."³ From this passage it has been suggested that "the reward which in the Fifth Commandment is held out to respectful children was originally a result of parental blessings."⁴ The Scots proverb is similar:—

"A faither's blessin' bigs the toun;
A mither's curse can ding it doun."⁵

In Greece such beliefs were no less strong. Plato puts it that "the curses of parents are, as they ought to be, mighty against their children, as no others are." And he instances the cursing of their sons by Oedipus, Amyntor, and Theseus. The man who assaulted his parent was polluted by a curse.⁶ According to the Koreans, "curses and disgrace in this life and the hottest hell in the world hereafter are the penalties of the disobedient or neglectful child."⁷ The last two cases show the automatic production of a curse by the sin itself—a notion distinctly tending

¹ J. L. Wilson, *Western Africa* (London, 1856), p. 393.

² E. A. Westermarck, *The Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas* ² (London, 1912-1917), i. 622.

³ Sirach, iii. 8-9.

⁴ E. A. Westermarck, *op. cit.*, i. 622.

⁵ J. Grimm, *Teutonic Mythology* (London, 1880-1888), iv. 1690.

⁶ Plato, *Laws*, ix. 881.

⁷ W. E. Griffis, *Corea* (London, 1882), p. 236.

towards the ethical development of these relations. The Barea and Kunama believe that the blessing of the old people is necessary for the success of any undertaking, and that their curse is inevitably efficacious.¹ Even elder brothers and sisters among the Greeks had the preponderance in this respect over the younger; "the Erinyes always follow the elder-born."²

The curse or blessing of the dying is particularly strong.³ The Ovaherero chief, when about to die, "gives them his benediction," a wish for "an abundance of the good things of this world."⁴ Similarly among the Hebrews⁵ and the Arabs.⁶ Among the Bogos the blessing of a father or a master is essential before taking up an employment or relinquishing it, engaging in a business, or contracting a marriage.⁷ The Moors say that the "curse of a husband is as potent as that of a father."⁸ Westermarck points out that "where the father was invested with sacerdotal functions—as was the case among the ancient nations of culture—his blessings and curses would for that reason also be efficacious in an exceptional degree."⁹

Obviously the wishes of one who is professionally in touch with the magical or the supernatural are more efficacious than those of ordinary men. "The anathema of a priest," say the Maoris, is a "thunderbolt that an enemy cannot escape."¹⁰ A Brāhman

¹ W. Munzinger, *Ostafrikanische Studien* (Schaffhausen, 1864), p. 475. ² Homer, *Iliad*, xv. 204.

³ J. Grimm, *op. cit.*, iv. 1690.

⁴ C. J. Anderson, *Lake Ngami* (London, 1856), p. 228.

⁵ T. K. Cheyne, "Blessings and Cursings," *Encyclopædia Biblica* (London, 1899-1903), i. col. 592.

⁶ J. Wellhausen, *Reste des arabischen Heidentums* (Berlin, 1897), pp. 139, 191.

⁷ W. Munzinger, *Ueber die Sitten und das Recht der Bogos* (Winterthur, 1859), p. 90.

⁸ E. A. Westermarck, *op. cit.*, i. 626. ⁹ *Ibid.*, 627.

¹⁰ J. S. Polack, *Manners and Customs of the New Zealanders* (London, 1840), i. 248-249.

"may punish his foes by his own power alone," viz. by his words.¹ A Rājput rāja, being cursed by Brāhmans, was "under a ban of excommunication" even among his friends.² There is a story that the curse of a Brāhman girl brought a series of disasters on a rāja and his kindred.³ According to the Talmud, the curse of a scholar never fails.⁴ The Gallas dread the dying curse of a priest or wizard.⁵ In Muhammadan countries the curses of saints or sharifs are particularly feared.⁶

The belief in the power of curses and blessings has a striking and widely extended application in the relations of the well-to-do with the poor and needy, and of the host with the guest. In the former case the idea that the blessing of those who have nothing else to give, or the curse of those who have no other remedy, is therefore efficacious, may have some connexion with the belief and practice. In the latter case may perhaps be seen a naturally regardful attitude towards the unknown and therefore mysterious. "He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack; but he that hideth his eyes shall have many a curse."⁷ "Turn not away thine eyes from one that asketh of thee, and give rare occasion to a man to curse thee; for if he curse thee in the bitterness of his soul, he that made him will hear his supplication."⁸ The Greek beggar had his Erinyes.⁹ The Damaras "would not think of eating in the presence of any of their tribe without sharing their meal with all-comers, for fear of being visited by a curse from their *Omum*—

¹ *The Laws of Manu*, xi. 32-33.

² N. Chevers, *A Manual of Medical Jurisprudence for India* (Calcutta, 1870), p. 659.

³ W. Crooke, *The Popular Religion and Folk-Lore of Northern India* (Westminster, 1896), i. 393.

⁴ *Talmud*: *Makkoth*, 11a.

⁵ Sir W. C. Harris, *The Highlands of Aethiopia* (London, 1844), iii. 50.

⁶ E. A. Westermarck, *op. cit.*, i. 563.

⁷ Proverbs xxviii. 27.

⁸ Homer, *Odyssey*, xvii. 475.

⁹ Sirach iv. 5-6.

kuru (or deity) and becoming impoverished.”¹ In Morocco, itinerant scribes go from house to house, “receiving presents and invoking blessings” upon the donors. For the latter it is a “profitable bargain, since they would be tenfold repaid for their gifts through the blessings of the scribes.” A Moor, starting on a journey, gives a coin to a beggar at the gate “so as to receive his blessings.”² The Nayādis of Malabar invoke, in their prayers, blessings upon the higher castes who give them alms.³ Among the Ovaherero “no curse is regarded as heavier than that which one who has been inhospitably treated would hurl at those who have driven him from the hearth.”⁴ An offended guest “might burn the house with the flames of his anger.”⁵ Guests and suppliants had their Erinyes.⁶ To the case of hospitality Westermarck applies the principle of the “conditional curse,”⁷ which will be discussed below.

Parallel with the case of the poor and needy is that of the servant and the wife. In West Africa “the authority which a master exercises over a slave is very much modified by his constitutional dread of witchcraft.”⁸ “Slander not a servant unto his master, lest he curse thee.”⁹ “Thou shalt not command [thy man-servant or thy maid-servant] with bitterness of spirit; lest they groan against

¹ J. Chapman, *Travels in the Interior of South Africa* (London, 1868), i. 341.

² E. A. Westermarck, *The Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas* (London, 1912-1917), i. 562.

³ S. Appadorai Iyer, “Nayādis of Malabar,” *Bulletin [of the] Madras Government Museum* (Madras, 1901), i. 72.

⁴ F. Ratzel, *The History of Mankind* (London, 1896-1898), ii. 480.

⁵ *Apastamba*, II. iii. 3.

⁶ Plato, *Epp.* viii. 357.

⁷ E. A. Westermarck, *op. cit.*, i. 586, ii. 584-585; *id.*, “*L-Ār*, or the Transference of Conditional Curses in Morocco,” *Anthropological Essays presented to Edward Burnett Tylor* (Oxford, 1907), pp. 361 *et seq.*

⁸ J. L. Wilson, *Western Africa* (London, 1856), pp. 271, 279.

⁹ Proverbs xxx. 10.

thee, and wrath be upon thee from God." ¹ In Morocco it is considered even a greater calamity to be cursed by a Shereeфа, or female descendant of the Prophet, than to be cursed by a Shreeف. ² "The houses," says Manu, "on which female relations, not being duly honoured, pronounce a curse, perish completely, as if destroyed by magic." ³

3. SPECIAL APPLICATIONS

The circumstances in which blessings or curses are uttered, and the persons upon whom they are directed, are obviously both numerous and varied. A few special cases may be cited, which have a bearing upon the nature of the uttered wish. Children, in particular, are the recipients of the blessings of parents. ⁴ The blessing of Ephraim and Manasseh by Jacob became among the Jews the regular formula by which parents blessed their children. Among the Malagasy, at a circumcision, the guests present honey and water to the children, and pronounce blessings upon them, such as "May they prosper!" ⁵ Among the Maoris, when a child was a month old, the ceremony of *tua* was celebrated, in which the *tohunga* pronounced a *karakia* of blessing:—

"Breathe quick thy lung,
A healthy lung,
Breathe strong thy lung,
A firm lung,
A brave lung . . ." ⁶

Jewish teachers to-day bless their pupils. In Fiji all prayer was concluded with malignant requests

¹ *Apostolic Constitutions*, vii. 13.

² E. A. Westermarck, *The Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas* ² (London, 1912-1917), i. 668.

³ *The Laws of Manu*, iii. 58.

⁴ Genesis ix. 26, xxiv. 60, xxvii. 7-38.

⁵ W. Ellis, *History of Madagascar* (London, 1838), p. 183.

⁶ E. Shortland, *Maori Religion and Mythology* (London, 1882), p. 40.

against the enemy : " Let us live, and let our enemies perish ! " ¹

The curse is particularly the weapon of the wronged and oppressed against their more powerful enemies, and of zealots against their bigoted opponents. In the Bible it is especially forbidden to curse God, parents, authorities, and the helpless deaf.² To bless God is to praise Him. Yet Orientals have a tendency to curse God, even on the slightest provocation in daily life. Blessing the king is implied or explicit in ceremonies of coronation, and on solemn occasions. The gods of Egypt bestowed a blessing on the Pharaoh, when they presented him with the symbol of life.³ The *abhiṣeka* of the rāja included a blessing, embodied in the consecrated water.⁴ The ceremonies of anointing, as we have seen in our study of this subject, often involve a blessing. A Jewish author records a Roman custom of gagging prisoners, when condemned to death, to prevent them from cursing the king.⁵

The connexion of food with the practice is remarkable. The blessing of food came in later Judaism to be a giving of thanks, and the idea was that food received gratefully acts as a blessing.⁶ The *bismillah* of Islām has a similar principle behind its use in this connexion. At an earlier stage, no doubt, the blessing, if used, was either positive or negative, removing injurious properties, but in either case simply magical.⁷

¹ L. Fison, in R. H. Codrington, *The Melanesians* (Oxford, 1891), p. 147.

² Exodus xxii. 28, xxi. 17; Leviticus xx. 9, xix. 14, xxiv. 15; Ecclesiastes x. 20.

³ Sir J. G. Wilkinson, *The Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians* (London, 1878), i. 276.

⁴ See above, p. 20.

⁵ C. Levias, "Cursing," *The Jewish Encyclopedia* (New York and London, 1925), iv. 390.

⁶ W. F. Adeney, "Blessing," *A Dictionary of the Bible* (Edinburgh, 1900-1904), i. 307.

⁷ Ernest Crawley, *The Mystic Rose*, ed. by Theodore Besterman (London, 1927), i. 182 *et seq.*

In the Banks Islands an "invocation of the dead," the *tataro*, is celebrated. Food is thrown for the souls of the dead with such words as these: "They who have charmed your food have clubbed you . . . drag them away to hell, let them be dead." In connexion with this is a practice of cursing a man's "eating"; if an accident befalls the recipient of such a curse, the utterer says: "My curse in eating has worked upon him, he is dead."¹ Among the Maoris, what was almost a sense of modesty and a principle of honour grew up about the ideas of food and its preparation. A typical formula for the counter-curse is:—

"Let the head of the curser
Be baked in the oven,
Served up for food for me,
Dead, and gone to Night!"²

To curse, *kanga*, was in effect to apply to another man any word which "had reference to food." It is recorded that a young man, seeing a chief in a copious perspiration, remarked that "the vapour rose from his head like steam from an oven," and that this remark caused a tribal war.³ The regular term for food, *kai*, was discontinued at Rotorua, because it happened to be the name of a chief. To use the term *kai* would in that case have been equivalent to a serious curse against the chief.⁴

Down to a late period in the history of Christianity, marriage was a personal "arrangement"; the Church stepped in only to pronounce its blessing upon the union. The Hebrews had a benediction both for betrothal and for marriage.⁵ The old Roman marriage by *confarreatio* included a *benedictio*, formulas for which are extant. When St. Ambrose says that

¹ R. H. Codrington, *op. cit.*, p. 147.

² E. Shortland, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

³ R. Taylor, *Te Ika a Maui*² (London, 1870), p. 94.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 95.

⁵ J. Selden, *Uxor Ebraica* (1726), i. 12; *Tobit*, vii. 13-14.

"marriage is sanctified by the benediction," he refers to one case only of a general practice, lasting through the Middle Ages, of concluding all private arrangements with a blessing. Thus all sales of goods and property were blessed.

The application of the curse as a protection of property and as a method of punishing theft has been incidentally noted. The early Arabs cursed the thief in order to recover the stolen goods.¹ The method is conspicuous in Samoa. Taboo is a "prohibition with a curse expressed or implied."² The embodiment of the wish in leaf or wooden images is termed in Polynesia *rahui* or *raui*, but we cannot always infer even the implied wish in prohibitory taboo.³ Allied principles inevitably shade into each other. The ancient Babylonian landmarks appear to have been inscribed with curses; such as: "Upon this man may the great gods Anu, Bēl, Ea, and Nusku look wrathfully, uproot his foundation, and destroy his offspring."⁴ The same practice was followed by the Greeks.⁵ Deuteronomy refers to the Semitic practice: "Cursed be he that removeth his neighbour's landmark."⁶ Taken over by Christianity, the practice survived, for example, in the English custom of "beating the bounds," in which the priest invoked curses on him who transgressed, and blessings on him who regarded the landmarks.⁷

¹ J. Wellhausen, *Reste des arabischen Heidentums*² (Berlin, 1897), p. 192.

² R. H. Codrington, *The Melanesians* (Oxford, 1891), p. 215.

³ T. White, "The Rahui," *Journal of the Polynesian Society* (Wellington, 1892), i. 275.

⁴ H. C. Trumbull, *The Threshold Covenant* (Edinburgh, 1896), pp. 166 *et seq.*, quoting Hilprecht.

⁵ Plato, *Laws*, viii. 843; C. F. Hermann, *Disputatio de terminis eorumque religione apud Græcos* (Göttingæ, 1846), p. 11.

⁶ Deuteronomy xxvii. 17.

⁷ D. Dibbs, "Beating the Bounds," *Chambers's Edinburgh Journal* (London and Edinburgh, 1854), xx. 49 *et seq.*

Some details may be put together which illustrate adhesions and developments. In Melanesia cursing by way of asseveration is common: a man will deny an accusation "by" his forbidden food, or "by" a *tindalo*.¹ The self-invoked curse, which we shall discuss below, passes in civilization into a conditional blessing, as in the English oath, "So help me, God." In practical ethics "profane swearing" is originally sinful, because of the irresponsible and unofficial use of the Divine name; later its sinfulness is limited to the spirit of resentment with which it is charged. In Melanesia, the practice of *vivnag*, or "sending off," is instructive for comparison with that found in civilization. A man will say, with a gesture towards a tree, *vawo aru!*—which is equivalent to telling his enemy to be hanged thereon.²

The limits of the blessing are well preserved in the Catholic distinctions between *panis benedictus* and *panis consecratus*, and between *benedictio vocativa* and *benedictio constitutiva*. The earlier principle, as we have seen, was to connect blessing and consecration, cursing and execration. It is in accordance with the extension of this principle that the curse is embodied in the "accursed thing," and that the transgressor of the prohibition himself becomes the "accursed thing" or the curse. This was the case with Achan, and with enemies "devoted" to destruction.³ On the same principle a blessed man is a "blessing."⁴

In the Old Testament "accursed" in the Revised Version, *hērem*, should be "devoted" as in the Authorized Version—devoted to God, not accursed from God.⁵ Similarly with the Greek translation *ἀνθέμα*. Such a thing is withdrawn from common

¹ R. H. Codrington, *The Melanesians* (Oxford, 1891), p. 217. ² *Ibid.*

³ Joshua vi. 18; Deuteronomy vii. 26. ⁴ Genesis xii. 2.

⁵ J. Denny, "Curse," *A Dictionary of the Bible* (Edinburgh, 1900-1904), i. 534.

use, either as "vowed" to God, or as put under a ban, in which case it has a species of "holiness."¹ As a rule, a thing devoted to destruction is under a curse. In Canon Law the development of *anathema* into excommunication is complete.

Here we arrive at the cursings and blessings of the community. In early culture a headman or body of "old men" may represent the community in this function. The State officials of Athens prayed for the health and safety of the people. Greek State liturgies included a "communion service," in which curses were invoked upon offenders.² Medieval and modern Christianity combine a service of communion with the Lenten penance. This has historical connexion with the early Hebrew rite, celebrated on Ebal and Gerizim. Six tribes stood on Mount Ebal to curse those who disobeyed the Law, and six stood on Mount Gerizim to pronounce the corresponding blessings upon those who kept it. The priests and Levites stood in the valley between, and on turning their faces to Gerizim pronounced a blessing, and on turning to Ebal pronounced a curse.³ The Talmudic idea that a curse has especial efficacy when pronounced three hours after sunrise is noteworthy in connexion with such formulated conditions as "in the sight of God and of this congregation."⁴

Throughout their history, private cursing and blessing preponderate over public and unofficial over official. As the moralized stage in religion supersedes the magical, the "mere power of the word" is confined to private practice, and perhaps becomes more

¹ Cp. Leviticus xxvii. 28-29; Acts xxiii. 12. For the transition between the earlier and the later idea of excommunication, see Ezra x. 8.

² See L. R. Farnell, *The Evolution of Religion* (London, 1903), pp. 196, 200.

³ Deuteronomy xi. 29, xxvii. 13; Joshua viii. 33; *Sota*, 35a, 36a; I. Broyde, "Gerizim, Mount, in Rabbinical Literature," *The Jewish Encyclopedia* (New York and London, 1925), v. 631.

⁴ C. Levias, "Cursing," *ibid.*, iv. 390.

sinister with secrecy. The enormous collections of private *dirae* and *imprecationes* which have survived from Greek and Roman times, chiefly in the form of leaden tablets or symbolic nails, inscribed with curses consigning an enemy to the infernal powers, testify to the hold retained by the primitive theory of the curse, just as the prevalence of profane swearing in modern civilization shows the convenience of the mere form, emptied of all content except vague resentment, for the satisfaction of a particular emotion. The hold exerted by the simple mystery of magic upon the popular imagination is echoed in literature and the motive of the efficacious curse is still employed in narrative fiction.

Nothing perhaps more strikingly illustrates the extent of Divine resentment than the cursing of the ground for the sins of the man,¹ or the extent of human resentment than the action of a curse beyond the grave. The Maoris took precautions to prevent enemies getting possession of their dead relatives' bones, lest they should "dreadfully desecrate and ill-use them, with many bitter jeers and curses."² The Banks Islanders watch the grave "lest some man wronged by [the dead man] should come at night and beat with a stone upon the grave, cursing him." Also, "when a great man died, his friends would not make it known, lest those whom he had oppressed should come and spit at him after his death, or *govgov* him, stand bickering at him with crooked fingers and drawing in the lips, by way of curse."³ The Greek Erinyes complete in the world beyond the grave the punishment which they began on earth.⁴ The Arabs of Southern Morocco "maintain that there are three classes of persons who are

¹ Genesis iii. 17-18.

² W. Colenso, *On the Maori Races of New Zealand* [1865], p. 28.

³ R. H. Codrington, *The Melanesians* (Oxford, 1891), p. 269. ⁴ *Æschylus, Eumenides, passim.*

infallibly doomed to hell, namely, those who have been cursed by their parents, those who have been guilty of unlawful homicide, and those who have burned corn. They say that every grain curses him who burns it.¹ The connexion between curses and the belief in punishments after death has been drawn out by Westermarck.²

In what may be called the lighter side of cursing, there is a curious set of customs connected with ideas of luck, and perhaps based on the notion that material injury may be discounted or diverted by a verbal or make-belief injury; in other cases, on a notion that the spirits may be stimulated by scolding and abuse; in others, again, it is perhaps evil and destructive spirits that are being driven away. Thus the Greek farmer, when sowing cummin, would curse and swear all the time, else the crops would not prosper.³ Estonian fishermen believe that good luck will attend their fishing if beforehand they are cursed. A fisherman will accordingly play some practical joke on a friend in order to receive his resentment in words. The more he storms and curses, the better the other is pleased; every curse brings at least three fish into his net.⁴ To obviate punishment for ritual sin, or to procure absolution, a Behari man will throw stones into a neighbour's house. The result is the reception of abuse, or even of personal violence.⁵

4. CONDITIONAL CURSING AND BLESSING

What Westermarck terms the "conditional curse," which he was the first student to remark, is an im-

¹ E. A. Westermarck, *The Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas* ² (London, 1912-1917), ii. 716 n.

² *Ibid.*, Chapters L-LI.

³ Theophrastus, *De historia et causis plantarum*, viii. 3.

⁴ J. W. Boecler and F. R. Kreutzwald, *Der Ehsten abergläubische Gebräuche, Weisen und Gewohnheiten* (St. Petersburg, 1854), pp. 90-91.

⁵ Sarat Chandra Mitra, "On the Har Panauri, or the Behari Women's Ceremony for Producing Rain," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (London, 1897), p. 482.

portant development of the principle of cursing and blessing, and has had considerable influence in the making of morality, especially in the sphere of good faith, honesty, and truthfulness. Put in its lowest terms, the energy of a conditional curse is the supernatural energy of an ordinary curse or of its embodiment, in a latent state. This is discharged by the act, if or when it takes place, against which the curse is directed. The principle applies also to blessings, but this application is less frequent.¹

"The term *l-âr*," Westermarck writes, "is applied by the Moors to a compulsory relation of a peculiar kind in which one person stands to another. The common expression, *âna fâr allâh u 'ârak*, 'I am in God's 'âr and your 'âr,' implies that a man is bound to help me, or, generally, to grant my request, whatever it may be, as also that if he does not do so his own welfare is at stake. The phrase 'In God's 'âr' only serves to give solemnity to the appeal: 'I am under the protection of God, and for his sake you are obliged to help me.' But the word *l-âr* is also used to denote the act by which a person places himself in the said relationship to another. *Hâd l-âr 'âlik*, 'This is 'âr on you,' is the phrase in common use when an act of this kind is performed. If the person so appealed to is unwilling to grant the request, he answers, *Hâd l-âr yîhrûz fik*, 'May this 'âr recoil upon you.' The constraining character of *l-âr* is due to the fact that it implies the transference of a conditional curse: If you do not do what I wish you to do, then may you die, or may your children die, or may some other evil happen to you. That *l-âr* implicitly contains a conditional curse is expressly

¹ E. A. Westermarck, "L-âr, or the Transference of Conditional Curses in Morocco," *Anthropological Essays presented to Edward Burnett Tylor* (Oxford, 1907), *passim*; *id.*, "The Influence of Magic on Social Relationships," *Sociological Papers* (London, 1905), *passim*; *id.*, *The Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas*² (London, 1912-1917), i. 586 *et seq.*, ii. 584 *et seq.*, *passim*.

stated by the people themselves, although in some cases this notion may be somewhat vague, or possibly have almost faded away.”¹

The various acts which establish *l-‘âr* all serve as “outward conductors of conditional curses.” ‘âr may be made by taking the son and giving him to the father, “This is ‘âr for you.” Another method is to present food. If the man accepts, he is bound to do what is asked of him. Refugees enter a tent or merely grasp the tent-pole, saying, “I am in God’s ‘âr and your ‘âr.”² An injured husband may put ‘âr upon the governor, to get redress, by going to him with a piece of his tent-cloth over his head; or he may have seven tufts of hair on his head, and appeal to another tribe. “The conditional curse is obviously supposed to be seated in” the tent-cloth or tufts of hair, and “from there to be transferred to the person” invoked. ‘âr may be made by piling stones. Two men making an appointment, and one failing to appear, the other makes a cairn at the spot, and takes the breaker of faith to it. The latter is then obliged to “give him a nice entertainment.” Similarly, with ordinary curses the cairn may be used. If a muleteer buys a new mule, his comrades ask him to treat them. If he refuses, they make a cairn, asking God to send misfortune on the mule. By way of revenge upon a niggardly man, scribes make a cairn, and each takes a stone therefrom, and, as he throws it away, says, “As we dispersed this heap of stones, so may God disperse for him that which makes him happy.” The sacrifice of an animal on the threshold is the most powerful method of making ‘âr. To see the blood is sufficient. Over such an animal the *bismillâh*, “In the name of God,” is not pronounced; and it cannot be eaten by the sacrificer or person invoked, but only by the poor.³ The practice is resorted to “for a variety of

¹ E. A. Westermarck, “*L-‘âr*,” p. 361.

² *Ibid.*, p. 362.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 363 *et seq.*

purposes: to obtain pardon from the government; or to induce the relatives of a person who has been killed to abstain from taking revenge; or to secure assistance against an enemy or mediation in the case of trouble." It "plays a very important part in the social life of the people."¹

It is also employed to put pressure upon *jinn* and dead saints—usually to restrain the former, and compel the assistance of the latter. Making cairns, or tying rags near a *sīyid* is '*âr* upon the saint. The rag is knotted, and the man says: "I promised thee an offering, and I will not release thee until thou attendest to my business."² Here we approach the conditional "blessing." Again, a man, invoking revenge, strews burnt corn on the floor of the *sīyid*, saying, "Throw, O Saint, So-and-so as I threw this corn." "This is '*âr* on the saint," as Westermarck points out, "but at the same time it is an act of symbolic magic."³

Forms of ordeal, and the whole theory of the oath, as well as its practice up to the latest stages of civilization, depend on the principle of the conditional curse, often embodied in symbolic action. The curse as an engine of law is well exemplified in Samoa. A theft has taken place; the injured party pays the "priest" to curse the thief and make him sick. If the thief falls ill, he restores the stolen property, and the "priest" prays for a reversal of the curse. Again: suspected parties are summoned by the chief. Grass is laid on the sacred stone, the village-god, and each person places his hand thereon, saying: "I lay hand on the stone. If I stole the thing, may I speedily die!" The use of grass is said to refer to the implied curse: "May grass grow over my house and family!" So, in ordinary disputes, a man will say: "Touch your eyes if what you say is true."⁴

¹ E. A. Westermarck, "*L-âr*," p. 366.

² *Ibid.*, p. 369.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 371.

⁴ G. Turner, *Samoa a Hundred Years ago and long before* (London, 1884), pp. 30, 184.

In the same way, European boys "touch wood" as a guarantee of truth.

An oath may be regarded as "essentially a conditional self-imprecation, a curse by which a person calls down upon himself some evil in the event of what he says not being true."¹ All the resources of symbolic magic are drawn upon in the multitudinous examples of this principle, which we study in more detail below. In Tenimber the swearer prays for his own death if what he says is false, and then drinks his own blood, in which a sword has been dipped.² The Malay drinks water in which daggers, spears, or bullets have been dipped, saying, "If I turn traitor, may I be eaten up by this dagger or spear."³ The Sumatran oath is still more explicit: "If what I now declare is truly and really so, may I be freed and cleared from my oath; if what I declare is wittingly false, may my oath be the cause of my destruction!"⁴ The Greek ὅρκος was, at an early period, the object sworn "by." The Ostyaks swear on the nose of a bear, which animal is held to have supernatural power.⁵ Hindus swear on the Sanskrit *Harivamśa*, or on water of the Ganges, or touch the legs of a Brāhman; Muhammadans, on the Koran; Christians, on the Bible.⁶

The accused person in Calabar drinks a ju-ju drink called *mbiam*, and repeats these words: "If I have been guilty of this crime . . . then Mbiam, *Thou* deal with me!"⁷ "Eating the fetish" and "drink-

¹ E. A. Westermarck, *The Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas* (London, 1912-1917), ii. 118.

² J. G. F. Riedel, *De sluijk- en kroesharige rassen tusschen Selebes en Papua* ('s Gravenhage, 1886), p. 284.

³ W. W. Skeat, *Malay Magic* (London, 1900), p. 525.

⁴ W. Marsden, *The History of Sumatra* (London, 1811), p. 238.

⁵ M. A. Castrén, *Nordiska resor och forskningar* (Helsingfors, 1852-1858), i. 307, 309, iv. 123-124.

⁶ E. A. Westermarck, *op. cit.*, ii. 120 (quoting authorities).

⁷ M. H. Kingsley, *Travels in West Africa* (London, 1897), p. 465.

ing the water of cursing" are prominent forms of the ordeal in Africa and elsewhere. The Hindu *śapatha* denotes both oath and ordeal. The medieval "trial by combat" was preceded by an oath, and thus defeat was tantamount to perjury.¹ The formula of the ordeal of the Eucharist ran: "Et si aliter est quam dixi et juravi, tunc hoc Domini nostri Jesu Christi corpus non pertranseat gutur meum, sed haereat in fauibus meis, strangulet me, suffocet me ac interficiat me statim in momento."²

In the contract and covenant a mutual conditional curse is largely used. Thus the 'āhēd of the Moors is the mutual form of 'ār. Chiefs exchange cloaks or turbans; and "it is believed that, if any of them should break the covenant, he would be punished with some grave misfortune."³ Reconciliation is effected, among the same people, by joining right hands; the holy man who superintends wraps the hands in his cloak, saying: "This is 'āhēd between you."⁴ A common meal also ratifies a covenant. If one party breaks faith, it is said: "God and the food will repay him."⁵ In the *pela* rite of Ceram, celebrated to settle a quarrel or to make peace, both parties attend a feast, and eat food into which drops of their blood are let fall and swords dipped. This they alternately eat.⁶ Reconciliation of two men in the islands of Leti, Moa, and Lakor, one man having cursed the other, is effected by the men eating together.⁷ To ratify a bond of paternity in Madagascar between two parties, a fowl has its head cut

¹ E. A. Westermarck, *op. cit.*, i. 505, ii. 689 (with authorities).

² F. Dahn, *Bausteine* (Berlin, 1880), ii. 16.

³ E. A. Westermarck, *op. cit.*, ii. 623.

⁴ *Ibid.*, ii. 623. ⁵ *Id.*, "L-'Ār," p. 373.

⁶ J. G. F. Riedel, *De sluik- en kroesharige rassen tusschen Selebes en Papua* ('s Gravenhage, 1886), pp. 128-129.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 342. See, on the whole subject, Ernest Crawley, *The Mystic Rose* ², ed. by Theodore Besterman (London, 1927), Chapters V, XI.

off, and is left bleeding during the rite. The parties pronounce a long mutual imprecation over the blood : “ O this miserable fowl, weltering in its blood ! Thy liver do we eat. . . . Should either of us retract from the terms of this oath, let him instantly become blind, let this covenant prove a curse to him.” ¹

The mutual conditional curse, it must be noticed, allows the curse proper to be more or less lost in the material symbolism of union. Since, moreover, all these analogous principles pass into one another so inevitably and gradually, we do not seem entitled to press the principle of the curse too far. In reconciliatory ceremonies, for instance, it is possible that the idea of union is sufficient ; the idea of the curse may adhere to it, but not essentially.

The oath carries with it the punishment for perjury. According to Roman legal theory, the *sanctio* of a statute is the penalty attached for breaking it. But in ancient States all laws were accompanied by a curse upon the transgressor.² True to its mission of serving where other methods fail, the curse receded as police efficiency increased. In the earliest culture, however, as that of the Australians, the personal efforts of the rulers work together with the impersonal energy of the supernatural engines they employ.

5. THE BLESSING AND THE CURSE AS INVOCATIONS

The distinction between the “ magical ” and the “ religious ” curse or blessing is not to be overemphasized. The two forms merge into one another, and either is as “ magical ” or “ religious ” as the other, while neither is the more efficacious. A god draws together in his own person the various threads of supernatural force. Among these are cursings and blessings. Their inherent mystery of power still

¹ W. Ellis, *History of Madagascar* (London, 1838), i. 187 *et seq.*

² E. Schrader, *Keilinschriftliche Bibliothek* (Berlin, 1889, *etc.*), ii., iii.

depends on the will of the utterer. His invocation of the god to execute for him his heart's expressed desire is rather a long circuiting than a guarantee of the result. The independent force of the wish, in fact, tends to remain even when the wish is merged in prayer. The personal quality of the utterer is still the characteristic of his wish. Psychologically, it is difficult to limit a desire by making it an invocation; to divide the attention between the object of the desire and the expression of the desire on the one hand, and an intervening divinity on the other, is a matter of training. Thus it is rarely the case that, when a man says, "God bless you!" he is conscious of the reference to God any more than when he says "Bless you!"

Further, there is the tendency for the principle of the curse, if not of the blessing, to become itself personified. This result is found as far back as the stage of culture represented by the Maoris. The "cursing thought" is personified in the Avesta; so is the "pious and good blessing." The Greeks personified the curse as Erinyes. Behind this there may be the notion "of a persecuting ghost, whose anger or curses in later times were personified as an independent spirit."¹ Allegorical figures of curses were included by painters in pictures of the wicked in Hell.² Subsequently the Erinyes became the ministers of Zeus.³ The steps by which a curse or blessing becomes an appeal to a god, a prayer that he will injure or benefit the person intended, are not indistinct. The Melanesian curses in the name of a *lio'a*, a powerful spirit. His connexion with the *lio'a* gives or adds efficacy to his curse.⁴ The efficacy of the mere word naturally is increased, not by the will of

¹ E. A. Westermarck, *The Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas* ² (London, 1912-1917), i. 379.

² Demosthenes, *Aristogiton*, i. 52.

³ E. A. Westermarck, *op. cit.*, i. 379 (with authorities).

⁴ R. H. Codrington, *The Melanesians* (Oxford, 1891), p. 51.

the spirit invoked, but by the use of his power. The Talmud and the Old Testament supply examples of "the ancient idea that the name of the Lord might be used with advantage in any curse."¹ Among the Hebrews the "Name" had peculiar importance.

In the next place, the appeal may take the form of a conditional blessing upon the god. In the *Yajur Veda* we read the formula, addressed to *Sūrya*: "Smite such a one, and I will give you an offering."² This method is clearly more efficacious. *Vagona* in the Banks Islands is the most serious of curses. It consists in procuring the *intervention* of a supernatural power.³ The story of Balaam includes a belief that the Divine power can be moved to effect the injury desired.⁴ A further step is taken when the moving is in the form of compulsion. As curses may develop into prayers, so prayers may develop into spells or curses. *Brahma* is the energy of the gods, but it is also the prayer, and "governs them."⁵ 'Apa is both "prayer" and "curse"; so is the Manx word *gwee*.⁶ Prayer is often possessed of magical power, just as a Toda spell is in the form of a prayer.⁷ Even in Greek religion the deity is constrained to effect a curse or a blessing;⁸ even the personified curse, the *Erinyes*, works by a spell-song which binds the victim.⁹ Thus the phrases, "by," "for the sake of," and the like, are but vague expressions of the actual relation between the invoker and the invoked. In the Banks Islands, cursing by way of asseveration is described in English terms as swearing "by" a

¹ E. A. Westermarck, *op. cit.*, i. 564 (with authorities).

² *Taittiriya Samita*, vi. 4 *et seq.*

³ R. H. Codrington, *op. cit.*, p. 217.

⁴ Numbers xxii–xxiv. ⁵ *Rig-Veda*, VI. li. 8.

⁶ Sir John Rhŷs, *Celtic Folklore* (Oxford, 1901), i. 349.

⁷ W. H. R. Rivers, *The Todas* (London, 1906), pp. 450,

453.

⁸ L. R. Farnell, *The Evolution of Religion* (London, 1905), p. 196.

⁹ *Æschylus, Eumenides*, 332.

forbidden food, or "by" some powerful *tindalo*.¹ The Toda *palol* prays with a gurgling utterance in the throat: "May it be well!" or "May it be blessed . . . with the buffaloes and calves; may there be no disease; . . . may clouds rise, may grass flourish, may water spring . . . for the sake of" certain "objects of reverence." This term, *idith*, is used in special connexion with the name of a god, and involves the idea of supplication; it is also employed in sorcery.² A modern Christian prayer for a blessing "for Christ's sake" is thus widely different, in the condition appended, from the Toda or Melanesian type. Magic, so to say, has given place to emotion, though itself originating in emotion, of another kind.

6. CONNEXION WITH MORALITY

Law gradually takes over the function of the curse, as a form of retribution; while prayer may still retain its use in cases where human intervention fails, or even as a spiritual replica of human intervention. The moralizing of the curse and the blessing within these limits follows the course of ethical evolution. In the Old Testament the undeserved curse has no effect, or may be turned by God into a blessing.³ The justice of the wish is left to the decision of God, while it follows that an unjust curse or blessing is a sin against the All-Just. The Greeks modified their theory of the hereditary transmission of a curse by arguing that each generation commits new sins.⁴ At one end of the process we have an invocation to the gods, as in the *Surpu* of the Chaldaeans, asking for relief from the effects of a curse, not for forgive-

¹ R. H. Codrington, *op. cit.*, p. 217.

² W. H. R. Rivers, *op. cit.*, pp. 214-215, 230.

³ Proverbs xxii. 23, xxvi. 2; Deuteronomy xxiii. 5; *Apostolic Constitutions*, iv. 6; T. K. Cheyne, "Blessings and Cursings," *Encyclopaedia Biblica* (London, 1899-1903), i. 592.

⁴ L. R. Farnell, *The Cults of the Greek States* (Oxford, 1896-1909), i. 77.

ness;¹ or "the thief invokes God while he breaks into the house," the bandit the Virgin.² At the other, the god rewards or punishes independently of human invocation, and with absolute justice. According to Aquinas, a *maledictio* is efficacious only when made by God.³ In the mouth of man, however uttered or however deserved, it is *per se* inefficacious. But when this stage is reached cursing or blessing has become a contradiction in terms.

2. *The Oath*

The interrelation of the principles underlying the oath and those underlying the curse and the blessing is obvious enough; they form part, indeed, of one and the same discussion. The oath, however, has assumed a considerable intrinsic importance, so that we have so far only glanced at it, postponing a detailed examination until the outlines of the history of the curse and the blessing should have become manifest. And it is to this detailed examination that we have now to proceed.

The oath⁴ has taken on its special importance because it connects with the vow, the ordeal, the covenant, and the wager, as well as with the curse and the blessing. Its definition must distinguish it from those, but we must recognize the fact that their primary constituent is the oath; they are special applications of it. A vow is not actually such, unless there is a personal condition realizable upon fulfilment; an ordeal "involves an imprecation with reference to the guilt or innocence of a suspected person, and its proper object is to give reality to this imprecation, for the purpose of establishing the

¹ H. Zimmern, *Beiträge zur Kenntnis der babylonischen Religion* (Leipzig, 1896), pp. 3, 7, 23.

² E. A. Westermarck, *op. cit.* ii. 733.

³ St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologica*, II, ii. 26.

⁴ Old English *ādāh* (the derivation is doubtful), "swear" = "answer"; *jurare* = "bind"; so *ōpkos*.

validity or invalidity of the suspicion.”¹ So in the Middle Ages “an oath was an indispensable preliminary to every combat, and the defeat was thus not merely the loss of the suit, but also a conviction of perjury, to be punished as such.”² But the oath of the ordeal was tested immediately. A covenant—the blood-covenant, for instance—has no force except from the fact that it is accompanied by curses or self-imprecations, and it is mutual. With regard to the distinction between the oath and the covenant, it is clear that the latter is a mutual oath, or, as it were, a mutual conditional curse. A good instance of this, as we have already noted at length, is to be found in the distinction between the Moroccan *l-âr*, the individual oath, and *l-âhâd*, the mutual, each party transferring conditional curses to the other.³ A wager, as in the old Roman method of action at law, is also a mutual process, and involves the oath in the form of a promise to pay. The ethical significance of the oath is, throughout, personal responsibility. As such it is eminently fitted for legal use, and has always figured conspicuously in the legal process of all races; it is still, in the highest civilizations, a formal guarantee of truthfulness, both in courts of law and in ordinary social intercourse, and still retains some of its primitive supernatural force and dignity, which seem to have been based originally upon the magical power of the spoken word, and later upon the appeal to a supernatural being.

The *New English Dictionary* defines “oath” as a “solemn and formal appeal to God (or to a deity or something held in reverence or regard), in witness of the truth of a statement, or the binding character of a promise or undertaking.” This definition is defective, because many primitive oaths have no appeal to anything “held in reverence or regard,” but are

¹ E. A. Westermarck, *The Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas* ² (London, 1912-1917), i. 505.

² *Ibid.*, i. 505.

³ See above, pp. 29 *et seq.*

absolutely direct; there is only the personal will or wish. Tylor defined an oath as an "asserveration or promise made under non-human penalty or sanction."¹ But oaths can be taken under human sanctions and upon living persons, just as a life may be insured.

Westermarck developed the conception of oath by emphasizing, not its indirect reference, but its essential character. "An oath," he says, "is essentially a conditional self-imprecation, a curse by which a person calls down upon himself some evil in the event of what he says not being true. The efficacy of the oath is originally entirely magical, it is due to the magic power inherent in the cursing words."² But the essence of "cursing and swearing" was in existence before human speech was at all well developed, and the efficacy of the spoken word was no doubt preceded by the efficacy of emotion, of the inarticulate will or wish. To complete the definition proposed by Westermarck, it is necessary to note that where a magical process is involved the imprecation is frequently not formally expressed; but a magical process may imply an imprecation, or itself be actually the imprecation, translated from words into matter.³ When oath gives place to solemn affirmation, the guarantee of good faith and of truth-speaking is now in the moral sphere of personality; there is no more magic or religion. The process has this in common with the pre-animistic, that its essence is conditional —the emotion being that of self-respect and personal responsibility. And this has always been the "nature of an oath."

I. EARLY FORMS

The oath in the form of a pure self-imprecation without a medium (or object sworn upon, or, rather, with which contact is established) or reference to a

¹ Sir E. B. Tylor, "Oath," *Encyclopædia Britannica*¹¹, xix. 939b.

² E. A. Westermarck, *op. cit.*, ii. 118.

³ *Ibid.*, ii. 690.

helper, witness, or punisher (king, spirit, or god), is naturally rarely found, but *a priori* it should precede the materialistic magical oath or the spiritualistic. A man may say or wish, "May I be hurt, or die, if what I say is untrue!" and such a process may clearly be antecedent to elaborate use of objects and spirits. Even in advanced culture, when religious sanctions are real and, later, customary, this mode is natural and frequent, both in serious (though not public) swearing and in profane oaths like "Damn me!" where there is no real reference to a divine power. In cases like that of the Sumatran oath, and a story by Eusebius, we do not know the form of the oaths, but they may have been merely spoken wishes without references. Marsden writes that the Sumatran swears thus: "If what I now declare is truly and really so, may I be freed and cleared from my oath; if what I assert is wittingly false, may my oath be the cause of my destruction."¹ The "oath" here may be the object sworn by or merely the spoken word, which in primitive thought early acquired an almost material substance, and was fully material when written.

Eusebius records that three men accused Bishop Narcissus and confirmed the charge by solemn oaths, the first that he might perish by fire, the second by pestilence, the third that he might lose his sight. These self-imprecations were fulfilled.² "The Dhar-kâr and Majhwâr in Mirzapur believe that a person who forswears himself will lose his property and his children; but as we do not know the contents of the oath, it is possible that the destruction of the latter is not ascribed to mere contagion, but is expressly imprecated on them by the swearer."³

¹ W. Marsden, *The History of Sumatra*³ (London, 1811), p. 238. ² Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, vi. 9.

³ E. A. Westermarck, *The Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas*² (London, 1912-1917), i. 60, citing W. Crooke, *The Tribes and Castes of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh* (Calcutta, 1896), ii. 287, iii. 444.

The oath is in the first place a curse, and the "magic power inherent in the cursing words" ¹ is its essence. The words may come to be regarded as a form of *mana*, magical power, semi-material and semi-spiritual. Thus, as we have seen, in old Teutonic folk-lore, the curse settles and takes flight, like a bird.² And the Irish believed that a curse once uttered "must alight on something."³ "To take an oath of any sort is always a matter of great concern among the Bedouins. It seems as if they attached to an oath consequences of a supernatural kind."⁴ And, further, they held that an oath must be taken at a distance from the encampment because of its possibly pernicious effect on the Arabs in general.⁵ "The curse," says Westermarck, "is looked upon as a baneful substance, as a miasma which injures or destroys anybody to whom it cleaves." Therefore Arabs, "when being cursed, sometimes lay themselves down on the ground so that the curse, instead of hitting them, may fly over their bodies."⁶

The punishing power of a word is particularly conspicuous in the case of an oath, and its contagious character resembles that which is attributed to tabooed persons and things, and it acts mechanically. Berbers undress when about to take an oath, and Westermarck concludes that the real reason is a "vague idea that the absence of all clothes will prevent the oath from clinging to themselves. They say that it is bad not only to swear, but even to be present when an oath is taken by somebody else."⁷

Passing from the oath "on" the swearer's self, we come to what are apparently cases of substitution. An intermediate stage is swearing on this or that part of the swearer's person. In Samoa a man says,

¹ E. A. Westermarck, *op. cit.*, ii. 118.

² J. Grimm, *Teutonic Mythology* (London, 1882-1888), iv. 1690. ³ *Ibid.*, iii. 1227.

⁴ J. L. Burckhardt, *Notes on the Bedouins and Wahabys* (London, 1830), p. 13. ⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 165.

⁶ E. A. Westermarck, *op. cit.*, i. 57.

⁷ *Ibid.*, i. 59.

“ Touch your eyes if what you say is true.”¹ This is putting a conditional curse on his eyes. So the Romans swore by eyes and head.² When a man swears to his truthfulness or innocence “ on ” another person, the oath may be a conditional curse on that person, as a substitute for the swearer, or as if the swearer had insured that person’s life, especially if held in reverence. Thus, it is common for a man to swear on his children or parents. The Tungus swears, “ May I lose my children and my cattle ! ”³ The same oath is found in Mirzapur, and is common in the North-West Provinces of India. Men swear on the heads of their children, or hold a child in their arms. “ May my children die if I lie ! ” says the Kol.⁴ In Ashanti a criminal may swear on the king’s life, and is then pardoned, or harm would result to the king.⁵ The Hottentots hold that the highest oath a man can take is “ by his eldest sister.”⁶

2. THE EMBODIED OATH

The largest class of oaths in the early and middle cultures, continuing also into the higher, is that in which the swearer swears “ by ” or “ on ” some object, powerful, dangerous, or sacred, or some person or animal with like qualities. This form of oath involves some questions of theory which will be discussed after some typical examples have been submitted.

In North-West India a cock is killed and, as the blood is poured on the ground, the oath is taken

¹ G. Turner, *Samoa a Hundred Years ago and long before* (London, 1884), p. 184.

² L. Schmitz, in “ *Jusjurandum*,” *A Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities*³ (London, 1890-1891), i. 1051.

³ J. G. Georgi, *Russia* (London, 1780-1783), iii. 86.

⁴ W. Crooke, *The Tribes and Castes of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh* (Calcutta, 1896), ii. 287, iii. 313, 444, etc.

⁵ Sir A. B. Ellis, *The Ewe-speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa* (London, 1890), p. 224.

⁶ T. Hahn, *Tsuni-Goam* (London, 1881), p. 21.

“ over it.”¹ The Khond swears on a tiger-skin, praying for death from a tiger if he lies, upon a lizard-skin “ whose scaliness they pray may be their lot if forsaken,” or upon an ant-hill “ that they may be reduced to powder.”² The Nāga of Assam stands within a circle of rope, praying that he may rot as a rope rots, or he holds a gun-barrel, a spear, or a tiger’s tooth, saying, “ If I do not faithfully perform my promise, may I fall by this ! ”³ The Ostyak imitates the act of eating and calls on a bear to devour him.⁴ “ The Iowa have a mysterious iron or stone, wrapped in seven skins, by which they make men swear to speak the truth. The people of Kesam . . . swear by an old sacred knife, the Bataks of South Tóba on their village idols. . . . ”⁵ The Moors lend efficacy to an oath by placing it in contact with, or making it in the presence of, “ any lifeless object, animal, or person endowed with *baraka*, or holiness, such as a saint-house, or a mosque, corn or wool, a flock of sheep or a horse, or a shereef.”⁶ The last is a comprehensive example. The oath upon sacred relics was prevalent in medieval Christendom, and “ so little respect was felt for the simple oath that the adjuncts came to be looked upon as the essential feature, and the imprecation itself to be divested of binding force without them.”⁷

The Latins swore by *Jupiter lapis*, holding the sacred stone in the hand.⁸ The Athenian archons

¹ W. Crooke, *op. cit.*, iv. 281.

² S. C. Macpherson, *Memorials of Service in India* (London, 1865), p. 83.

³ J. Butler, “ Rough Notes on the Angámi Nágás and their Language,” *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* (Calcutta, 1875), XLIV. i. 316.

⁴ G. A. Erman, *Travels in Siberia* (London, 1848), i. 492.

⁵ E. A. Westermarck, *The Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas* ² (London, 1912-1917), ii. 119 (citing authorities).

⁶ *Ibid.*, ii. 120.

⁷ H. C. Lea, *Superstition and Force* ⁴ (Philadelphia, 1892), p. 29.

⁸ J. E. Tyler, *Oaths* ² (London, 1835), p. 121.

stood on a sacred stone and swore to rule righteously.¹ The ancient Danes swore on stones, and the same oath is recorded of the islanders of Iona.² In Samoa the accused lays his hand on the sacred stone of the village, and says, "I lay hand on the stone. If I stole the thing, may I speedily die!"³ The Old Prussians placed the right hand on the neck and the left on the holy oak, saying, "May Perkun [the thunder-god] destroy me!"⁴ The Lombards swore lesser oaths on consecrated weapons, greater on the Gospels.⁵ The chief oath of the Danes was on a sacred ring; their oath to Alfred was taken on this.⁶ The Kṣatriya swore by his weapons or his horse.⁷ The medieval knight swore *super arma*.⁸ Achilles swore by his sceptre.⁹ Medieval theory distinguished the written or spoken oath from that which was ratified by contact with or inspection of a sacred object. The latter was a corporal or bodily oath, and the sacred object was a "halidome."¹⁰ A frequent oath among the Bedouins was "to take hold with one hand of the *wasat*, or middle tent-pole, and to swear by the life of this tent, and its owners."¹¹ The most stringent oath among Hindus is that in which water of the Ganges is held in the hand.¹² Similarly, the Homeric gods swore by the river Styx.¹³

¹ Sir J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough*³ (London, 1911-1915), i. 160. ² *Ibid.*, i. 160.

³ G. Turner, *Samoa a Hundred Years ago and long before* (London, 1884), pp. 30, 184.

⁴ Sir E. B. Tylor, "Oath," *Encyclopædia Britannica*¹¹, xix. 940a.

⁵ J. Grimm, *Deutsche Rechtsaltertümer*⁴ (Leipzig, 1899), p. 896. ⁶ Sir E. B. Tylor, *op. cit.*, xix. 940b.

⁷ *Navada-smṛti*, xix. 248.

⁸ C. Du Fresne du Cange, *Glossarium mediae et infimæ Latinitatis* (Niort, 1883-1887), s.v. "Juramentum," iv. 459.

⁹ Homer, *Iliad*, i. 234. ¹⁰ Sir E. B. Tylor, *op. cit.*, xix. 941b.

¹¹ J. L. Burckhardt, *Notes on the Bedouins and Wahābys* (London, 1830), p. 72.

¹² Sir W. H. Sleeman, *Rambles and Recollections of an Indian Official* (London, 1844), ii. 116.

¹³ Hesiod, *Theogonia*, 784-806.

Other natural forces, such as the sun and moon, are frequently sworn by, as Westermarck supposes, because of "their superior knowledge as all-seeing."¹

Arabs swore by dipping hands in the blood of a camel. The Sânsiya swear over the blood of a cock. The Homeric oath, given by Tyndareus for the defence of Helen, was taken standing on a sacrificed steed.² The old Norse ring held during the oath was sprinkled with the blood of a bull.³ Hannibal's famous oath, or vow, against Rome was taken *tactis sacris*; and the Homeric Greeks laid the hand on the sacrifice,⁴ as the medieval European touched the altar or the relics. So Harold is depicted in the Bayeux tapestry. Another method of the Nâgas of Assam (involving a mutual oath) is for the two men to hold a dog which is chopped in two; this is emblematic of the fate which will befall the perjurer. According to one interpretation of a Roman oath, the swearer invoked the heaven god, while a hog was slain with the sacred flint-stone, representing the god's thunderbolt, and he prayed, "So smite the Roman people if they break the oath!"⁵ "The Tungus brandishes a knife before the sun, saying, 'If I lie may the sun plunge sickness into my entrails like this knife.'"⁶

It is perhaps in accordance with primitive thought at one stage of its development that the strongest of all oaths is that in which the sacred object, or medium, is eaten or drunk. Sir James Frazer regards this process as being the *differentia* of the "Aino sacrament."⁷ The Tenimberese dip a sword in their own blood and drink it, praying for death if they are forsown.⁸ So, in Malaysia, water is drunk in which

¹ E. A. Westermarck, *op. cit.*, ii. 122. ² Pausanias, III. xx. 9.

³ E. A. Westermarck, *op. cit.*, ii. 621.

⁴ Livy, xxi. 1; *Iliad*, iii. 275, xix. 175.

⁵ Livy, i. 24; Polybius, iii. 25.

⁶ Sir E. B. Tylor, *op. cit.*, xix. 940a.

⁷ Sir J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough*³ (London, 1911-1915), viii. 313.

⁸ J. G. F. Riedel, *De sluijk- en kroesharige rassen tusschen Celebes en Papua* ('s Gravenhage, 1886), p. 284.

daggers, spears, or bullets have been dipped : " May I be eaten up by this dagger or spear ! " is the formula.¹ The Tunguses have another oath, in which the swearer drinks the blood of a dog, the throat of which has been cut and its flesh divided. The swearer says, " I speak the truth, and that is as true as it is that I drink this blood. If I lie, let me perish, burn, or be dried up like this dog."² The Chuvashes place bread and salt in the mouth, and pray, " May I be in want of these, if I say not true ! "³ The "great oath" of the Tibetans includes the eating of a portion of an ox's heart.⁴ The Masai drinks blood, saying, " If I have done this deed, may God kill me ! " If he is innocent, no harm happens; if guilty, it is expected that he should die in a fortnight.⁵ On the Gold Coast a man taking an oath eats or drinks something which has a connexion with a deity, who is invoked to punish him if he forswears himself.⁶ Elsewhere on the Gold Coast an accused man had to drink the "oath-draught" and pray that the fetish may slay him if he be guilty.⁷ " If I have been guilty of this crime, then, Mbiam ! thou deal with me ! " swears the accused in Calabar, after drinking filth and blood, the juju-drink, *mbiam*.⁸ So with the majority of ordeals, their essence being an oath, a self-imposed imprecation.⁹

¹ W. W. Skeat, *Malay Magic* (London, 1900), p. 525.

² J. G. Georgi, *Russia* (London, 1780-1783), iii. 86.

³ *Ibid.*, i. 110.

⁴ L. A. Waddell, *The Buddhism of Tibet* (London, 1895), p. 569 *n.*

⁵ A. C. Hollis, *The Masai* (Oxford, 1905), p. 345; M. Merker, *Die Masai* (Berlin, 1904), p. 211.

⁶ Sir A. B. Ellis, *The Tshi-speaking Peoples of the Gold Coast of West Africa* (London, 1887), p. 196.

⁷ W. Bosman, *A New Description of the Coast of Guinea* (London, 1721), p. 126.

⁸ M. H. Kingsley, *Travels in West Africa* (London, 1897), p. 465.

⁹ E. A. Westermarck, *The Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas* (London, 1912-1917), ii. 689 *et seq.*

3. PSYCHOLOGY OF THE OATH

The above-cited examples illustrate the more primitive forms of the oath. It seems probable that eating or drinking the "oath" is the latest of these forms, and that the earliest is the merely verbal self-imprecation. As for the original meaning of the employment of a concrete object, sacred or otherwise, which itself comes to be regarded as the "oath,"¹ containing, as it does, the words or the power of the curse, ready to act with mechanical precision if the swearer has lied, the principle is clearly magical, passing into symbolism as the belief in magic decays. But the question remains as to what psychological process developed the employment of a concrete object. "Sometimes," says Westermarck, "the person who takes the oath puts himself in contact with some object which represents the state referred to in the oath, so that the oath may absorb, as it were, its quality and communicate it to the perjurer. . . . In other cases the person . . . takes hold of a certain object and calls it to inflict on him some injury if he perjure himself." Again, another "method of charging an oath with supernatural energy is to touch, or to establish some kind of contact with, a holy object on the occasion when the oath is taken."² Such are some of the methods of increasing the magical power inherent in the cursing words.

At a stage of religious evolution when sacred objects are in being, it is natural that they should be employed to strengthen the oath. Later still, the oath is strengthened by contact with a god, or his name is invoked, or a sacrifice is made. But in earlier stages, when the object or medium is not sacred of itself, but indifferent, how came it to be used in a magical way and on magical principles? A large proportion of primitive oaths consists of cases

¹ The Greek *δρκος* also meant the object sworn by; the word for oath has this meaning in most languages.

² E. A. Westermarck, *op. cit.*, ii. 118-119.

of imitative magic. The swearer, for instance, may apply a spear to his body, and pray that he may be slain by the spear if he is forsown. But is such ritual due to a belief in imitative magic? It seems more probable that an act of pre-imitation (so characteristic of early psychology) came to be employed as a mode of *realizing* the nature of an oath, and that from this was developed the magical force of the embodied words. Pantomime led to imitative magic, not *vice versa*. In such cases as where a man stands on a stone and the strength of stone adds confirmation to his words,¹ there is natural association of ideas, which may lead to a belief in a magical connexion.

4. THE OATH AND THE GOD

When the theistic stage of religion is reached, and the god subsumes in his own person a multitude of holy lines of force, the oath is brought into connexion with the god. But even here the connexion remains magical for a considerable time, before it decays into a symbolic relation or is changed into that between offender and punisher. "The oaths which the Moors swear by Allah are otherwise exactly similar in nature to those in which he is not mentioned at all. But the more the belief in magic was shaken, the more the spoken word was divested of that mysterious power which had been attributed to it by minds too apt to confound words with facts, the more prominent became the religious element in the oath. The fulfilment of the self-imprecation was made dependent upon the free will of the deity appealed to, and was regarded as the punishment for an offence committed by the perjurer against the god himself."²

When the god is appealed to, the appeal may be for his help or his witness; or, again, his divine name may be invoked, and in case of perjury the power of the name, thus wrongly used, will punish the for-

¹ Sir J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough*³ (London, 1911-1915), i. 160. ² E. A. Westermarck, *op. cit.*, ii. 122.

swearer. In many cases there is merely an act of transference; the swearer, so to say, hands his oath over to the god, who will deal with it according to the innocence or guilt of the swearer. The god Mwetyi, in South Guinea, is "invoked as a witness, and is commissioned with the duty of visiting vengeance upon the party who shall violate the agreement."¹ The Comanche Indian calls upon the great spirit and earth to testify to the truth of his oath.² The Solomon Islander swears by a *tindalo*, "spirit."³ The Greek said, "let God know," "let Zeus know"; the Latin, "I call to witness," among other things, the ashes of his forefathers. The Egyptian called Thōth to witness;⁴ he would also swear by the name of Pharaoh.⁵ The ordinary "invocation" of a deity is a vague appeal,⁶ but it seems that the phrases corresponding to "by,"⁷ common in most languages, imply that the god is a helper or a guarantor.

When contact is established between the swearer and objects belonging to a representative of the deity, the principles of magic apply, for the punishment is mechanically administered by means of the sacred object. Traces of the emotion which prompts these ideas may be found even when magic is superseded by symbolism or mere reverence.

Laying the hand on the altar, the sacrifice, or the sacred relics is a regular method where these holy paraphernalia are existent.⁸ The Iranian swore before

¹ J. L. Wilson, *Western Africa* (New York, 1856), p. 392.

² H. R. Schoolcraft, *Historical and Statistical Information respecting the History, Condition, and Prospects of the Indian Tribes of the United States* (Philadelphia, 1851-1860), i. 132.

³ R. H. Codrington, *The Melanesians* (Oxford, 1891), p. 217.

⁴ C. P. Tiele, *Comparative History of the Egyptian and Mesopotamian Religions* (London, 1882), i. 229.

⁵ Sir J. G. Frazer, *op. cit.*, i. 419.

⁶ Latin had "Ita me iuvet!" as English has "So help me, God!" [as I speak true].⁷ Greek μά, Latin *per*.

⁸ Sir E. B. Tylor, "Oath," *Encyclopædia Britannica*¹¹, xix. 939-940; J. E. Tyler, *Oaths*² (London, 1835), p. 104.

a bowl containing incense, brimstone, and one *danak* of molten gold.¹ "To make an oath binding," the Gold Coast people give the swearer "something to eat or drink which in some way appertains to a deity, who is then invoked to visit a breach of faith with punishment."² So in medieval Europe the host was eaten, and the swearer prayed that it might choke him if he lied.³

When the priesthood is influential, an oath may be made on the priestly person, as by the Hindu touching the legs of a Brāhman.⁴ By far the most usual medium in the higher religions is to touch, hold, or kiss the sacred books of the faith. The Hindu swears on the Sanskrit *Harivamśa*; the Muhammadan on the Koran; the Jew on the Hebrew Bible; the Christian on the "book"—that is, the New Testament. The old Lombards swore the "greater oath" on the Gospels.⁵ The Sikh swears on the Granth; the Iranian on the Avesta. In medieval Europe the book was laid on the altar.⁶ The words of Chrysostom show an early development in the Christian Church, possibly due to the Jewish practice, which itself has been said to be a loan from the Roman. He writes: "Do thou, if nothing else, at least reverence the very book thou holdest forth to be sworn by, open the Gospel thou takest in thy hands to administer the oath, and, hearing what Christ therein saith of oaths, tremble and desist."⁷ The practice of kissing the book appears quite early in the Middle Ages.

5. VARIOUS RITUALS

The ritual and rules of oath have interesting

¹ *Vendidād*, iv. 54-55.

² Sir A. B. Ellis, *The Tshi-speaking Peoples of the Gold Coast of West Africa* (London, 1887), p. 196.

³ F. Dahn, *Bausteine* (Berlin, 1879-1880), ii. 16.

⁴ Sir W. H. Sleeman, *Rambles and Recollections of an Indian Official* (London, 1844), ii. 116.

⁵ C. Du Fresne du Cange, *Glossarium medicæ et infirmæ Latinitatis* (Niort, 1883-1887), s.v. "Juramentum," iv. 59.

⁶ Sir E. B. Tylor, *op. cit.*, xix. 941b.

⁷ St. Chrysostom, *Ad Populum Antiochenum*, xv. 5.

varieties. Greeks and Romans distinguished between the sexes in the oaths proper to each. Both Greeks¹ and Jews² lifted up the hand. The French and the Scots raise the right hand, saying respectively, "Je jure," and "I swear by Almighty God."³

Among formulas there is as early as Justinian the lengthy invocation: "I swear by God Almighty, and His only begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost, and the Most Holy Glorious Mother of God and ever Virgin Mary, and by the Four Gospels which I hold in my hand, and by the Holy Archangels, Michael and Gabriel," etc.⁴ Derived from Latin idiom, the phrase, "So help me, God!" and its varieties have persisted. "Sic me adjuvet Deus!" was used in Charlemagne's days; old French had "Si m'aït Dex"; German, "So mir Gotte helfe." Hebrew variations were, "As the Lord liveth and as thy soul liveth," "By the life of," "So do God to me and more also!"

The selection of an object to swear by has given play to the imagination, and in other cases has been determined by special circumstances. Instead of swearing by the *genius* of the emperor, the early Christians swore by his safety, to avoid idolatry.⁵ The Brāhman swore by truth, or by his own good deeds;⁶ Telemachus by the sorrows of his father.⁷ In medieval Europe a man swore by his beard or his name, or by the head of God. There was a "great oath" "per Regiam majestatem." William the Conqueror swore "by the splendour of God," the most magnificent oath in history;⁸ also "per crea-

¹ Homer, *Iliad*, xix. 175, 254.

² Genesis xiv. 22; Deuteronomy xxxii. 40.

³ J. E. Tyler, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

⁴ Sir E. B. Tylor, *op. cit.*, xix. 940-941.

⁵ Tertullian, *Apologia*, xxxii.

⁶ *The Laws of Manu*, viii. 113, 256; *Nārada-smṛti*, xviii.

^{239.}

⁷ Homer, *Odyssey*, xx. 339.

⁸ C. Du Fresne du Cange, *op. cit.*, iv. 462-463.

turos." Rufus swore "per hoc et per hoc"; Richard I. by God's legs; John Lackland by God's teeth.¹

The profane oath, used to emphasize an asseveration, has many quaint varieties in all languages. The Latin was fond of *me hercle!*; the Italian is addicted to *per Bacco*. The Elizabethan English used many curious conversational oaths, mostly modelled on the official formulas, such as "Zounds" ("God's wounds"), "Odsbodkins" ("God's body"), "Sdeath" ("God's death"). A pious instinct prompted substitution, to avoid using the sacred name, hence "morableu" ("mort Dieu"). Similarly Socrates swore "by the dog," "by the cabbage," and "by the ____"; Lampon "by the goose," as did Socrates also.

6. PENALTY OF FALSE OATH

Whatever the ritual and formula of the oath, or the nature of the object with which the oath is brought into contact, the practical sense is the conditional punishment for perjury. The fear of magic power in the primitive mind has the same value as the fear of God; behind both is the fear of retribution. It was psychologically inevitable that the oath should come to be based on the moral resentment of a deity. Even in the case of the African swearing by a fetish, or the New Hebridean invoking punishment from the spirits, man's personal responsibility puts itself in the hands of a retributory power. And from the earliest stages the community, in some way or other, has made real the supernatural penalty, either by shamanistic terrorizing or by prosecution for perjury.

If, as Westermarck holds, the god in early thought is, even though appealed to, "a mere tool in the hand of the person invoking him," since the efficacy of an oath is magical,² yet the fear of retribution is

¹ C. Du Fresne du Cange, *op. cit.*, iv. 462-463; Sir E. B. Tylor, *op. cit.*, xix. 941b.

² E. A. Westermarck, *The Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas* ² (London, 1912-1917), ii. 687.

still present, and in the highest cultures this conception probably overrides the idea of "the moral nature of the Divinity" being depreciated. This view of the god's relation to perjury, as to other crimes, is clearly a late sophistication without any practical social meaning. Grotius was, therefore, mistaken when he wrote that even the man swearing by false gods is bound by his oath "because, though under false notions, he refers to the general idea of god-head, and therefore the true God will interpret it as a wrong to himself if perjury be committed."¹ God and his equivalents are the supreme and supernatural sanction of the judgments of the social organism. It is precisely because of this principle that the gods have come to be regarded as all-good no less than all-powerful. If, for instance, Westermarck notes, a god is "frequently appealed to in oaths, a general hatred of lying and unfaithfulness may become one of his attributes. . . . There is every reason to believe that a god is not, in the first place, appealed to because he is looked upon as a guardian of veracity and good faith, but that he has come to be looked upon as a guardian of these duties because he has been frequently appealed to in connexion with them."² In turn the god's perfect veracity and hatred of a lie make the supernatural sanction stronger.

The process by which an oath becomes personified into an oath-deity presents no psychological difficulty, nor that by which a god, like Zeus, subsumes the attribute of an avenger of perjury. The Erinyes of the Greeks were personified oaths and curses; so, too, were the Arai. It is significant, however, that the Horkos hardly became a deity; the oath-object was too much of a fetish to develop independently into anything higher.

"Owing to its invocation of supernatural sanction, perjury is considered the most heinous of all acts of

¹ H. Grotius, *De jure belli ac pacis*, V. xiii. 12.

² E. A. Westermarck, *op. cit.*, ii. 123.

falsehood."¹ Like all gross crimes, it is supposed to disseminate a contagious miasma.² The Greeks held that, if not punished in this life, it would be after death.³ Such cases as are extant of its being ignored by custom or law are probably due to some transitional stage in the social régime, when, for instance, custom was giving place to law, or to a certain decadence. Westermarck quotes the Rejangs of Java, some Batak of Sumatra, early Greeks, Hebrews, and Teutons, as having no penalty for perjury.⁴ There are indications that the early Romans also ignored the crime. But, as Westermarck adds, if not regarded as a crime, it was regarded as a sin, in which case the shamanistic machine would effectively carry out the required retribution. Kafirs and Malays punish perjury severely. The old Hindus banished or fined the perjurer. The cutting off of the right hand, uplifted during the oath, was the penalty among the ancient Scandinavians and Teutons, and lasted into the Middle Ages, and beyond.⁵

7. APPLICATIONS OF THE OATH

Among the applications of the oath and the institutions which essentially involve it, the following may be noted briefly, in order to illustrate the general range of the oath. Early kings, especially of the magical type, may have been constrained by some form of shamanistic engagement. The kings of Mexico swore to make the sun shine, the rain to fall, and the crops to grow.⁶ On similar principles gods were believed to swear among Hindus,⁷ Hebrews, Greeks, and Romans. Gods swore in human fashion,

¹ E. A. Westermarck, *op. cit.*, ii. 123.

² *Vendidād*, iv. 54-55.

³ *A Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities*³ (London, 1890-1891), s.v. "Jusjurandum," i. 1045b.

⁴ E. A. Westermarck, *op. cit.*, ii. 123.

⁵ *Ibid.*, citing authorities up to the 16th century.

⁶ Sir J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough*³ (London, 1911-1915), i. 356.

⁷ *Nārada-smṛti*, I. xviii. 243.

lifting up the right hand.¹ A Homeric god, forsworn by the Stygian oath, was exiled for nine years.²

The archons, generals, and other officials of Athens swore oaths on taking office. The official oath was more prominent there, it seems, than in Rome. The emphasis placed upon the oath in medieval Christian theory seems to have developed the coronation-oath, which also brought the monarch, in a sense, into responsible contact with the Church. This oath still survives in constitutional and other monarchical régimes. Both Greek and Roman soldiers took an oath. The Roman *sacramentum* included an *execratio*, but Tylor traces it to the Roman legal wager, according to which each party to a suit paid money into court, forfeiting his pledge in case of defeat.³ Originally this legal *sacramentum* may have been accompanied by a self-imprecation. It is supposed that the military *sacramentum* developed into an oath of fealty to the emperor. In the Athenian *ἀντηρίσις*, preliminary stage of a suit, each party swore.⁴ Primitive examples of the oath at law are not wanting. On the Slave Coast of West Africa the god Mawu is appealed to not only by the parties, but by the judge.⁵

The majority of ordeals are really concrete oaths taken by the accused party, and the self-imprecation is realized immediately. In modern law the legal oath is taken by witnesses alone, though the juror's oath survives. This is in direct opposition to the medieval principle, which developed considerable abuses in the practice of compurgation. Evidence was not wanted; only proofs were asked for, and, in default of proof, an oath. This could be multiplied

¹ J. E. Tyler, *Oaths*² (London, 1835), p. 98.

² Hesiod, *Theogonia*, 793.

³ Sir E. B. Tylor, "Oath," *Encyclopædia Britannica*¹¹, xix. 939b.

⁴ L. Schmitz, in *A Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities*³ (London, 1890-1891), s.v. "Jusjurandum," i. 1049.

⁵ J. Spieth, *Die Ewe-Stämme* (Berlin, 1906), p. 415.

by one or more *compurgatores*, practically witnesses to the truth of the party's oath of innocence or right. When unsupported, the party swore *sua manu*. According to the number of his *compurgatores*, he swore by any number of "hands." A bishop of Ely swore *centesima manu*, and as many as three hundred are recorded. The *compurgatores* laid their hands on the *pyx*, and the accused laid his hand upon theirs.¹ One attempted remedy for the abuse was the judicial duel, the wager of battle. The final remedy was found in confining the privilege of oath to the witnesses.

The essence of ordeals is the oath, though the fact is obscured by the unfair incidence of the physical result. Hindu theory recognized the essential connexion; the word *sapatha* connotes both "oath" and "ordeal." Oaths were used for lesser offences, as we have seen, and ordeals for heavy crimes.² The medieval wager of battle was a mutual ordeal, each party taking an oath.

The covenant and the treaty have been largely based on the mutual oath, until signatures replaced the spoken word. The Greeks and Romans ratified their treaties by oaths, the text of which was inscribed in the official inscriptions.

In the primitive ritual the mutual oath was strengthened by various imitative and magical methods.³ The blood-covenant is regularly accompanied by curses or self-imprecations. Similarly with other forms of compact. Tylor notes the differentia, which also applies to the vow, in the following typical cases: grasping hands, putting one hand between the hands of another, are compacts, not oaths. The hand "under the thigh" is a rite of covenant. Mixing blood or drinking one another's blood is not an oath

¹ C. Du Fresne du Cange, *op. cit.*, s.vv. "Sacramentum," "Juramentum"; J. E. Tyler, *op. cit.*, p. 266.

² *Närada-smṛti*, I. xviii. *et seq.*

³ See Sir J. G. Frazer, *op. cit.*, i. 289; Genesis xv. 9 *et seq.*; Jeremiah, xxxiv. 18.

unless there is a mutual self-imprecation, such as dipping weapons in the blood.¹

8. PROHIBITION OF THE OATH

Certain sacred persons are prohibited from incurring the dangerous risks of an oath. Such was the *flamen* of Jupiter, and Plutarch suggests that the reason was that otherwise "the peril of perjury would reach in common to the whole commonwealth, if a wicked, godless, and forsworn person should have the charge and superintendence of the prayers, vows, and sacrifices made in the behalf of the city."² Nor might the Vestal Virgins take an oath.³

The sect of the Essenes were averse from the oath; they prided themselves on their truthfulness; they argued that those who could not be believed without swearing were self-condemned.⁴ Christ taught, "Swear not at all."⁵ His expounders have explained the precept to refer to profane and frivolous oaths alone. But the teaching, "Let your yea be yea and your nay nay," is clearly inclusive, and of the same character as the Essene doctrine. The Anabaptists and, later, the Quakers refused oath-taking. The latter have argued that "if on any particular occasion a man swear in addition to his yea or no, in order to make it more obligatory or convincing, its force becomes comparatively weak at other times when it receives no such confirmation." But this argument neglects the power (apart from that of superstition or religious feeling) of ceremony, which is practically the imperious gesture of the social body.

¹ Sir E. B. Tylor, *op. cit.*, xix. 940; *cp.* Genesis xxiv. 2, xlvi. 29; Herodotus, iv. 70.

² Plutarch, *Quæstiones Romæ*, xliv.

³ Aulus Gellius, *Noctes Atticæ*, X. xv. 31.

⁴ Josephus, *Bellum Judaicum*, II. viii. 6.

⁵ Matthew v. 34.

II

THE PRACTICE AND PSYCHOLOGY OF ANOINTING

1. Introductory : *Hygiene and Aesthetics*

UNCCTION,¹ anointing with oil, is a minor act of ritual, which possesses, however, considerable significance for the history of sacramental religion. Its forms correspond generally to the practical purposes for which, in early culture, animal and vegetable fats and oils were so largely employed, while in both principle and practice it has connexions with painting and dress, decoration and disguise, nutrition and medicine, lustration and the various uses of water and blood.

The application of unguents to the skin and the hair has obtained, as a daily cosmetic practice, from the Tasmanians to the ancient Greeks and Romans. The material varies, in both secular and sacred uses, from crude animal fat to elaborate and costly perfumed vegetable oils. Among the lower races, animal fats are employed, frequently in combination with ochre, occasionally with such substances as charcoal, soot, and ashes. Higher stages of culture prefer vegetable oils, with gums, balsams, vegetable pastes and powders, such as turmeric, sandal, and mustard, sawdust, and flour, or the sap and pollen of plants, some of which are occasionally used without oil. Perfumes were usually prepared in the form of ointments. Lastly, the term "unguent" is in most languages made to

¹ The etymological identifications, still to be met with in dictionaries, of English *salve*, etc., and Latin *salvus*, etc., and of Latin *unguo*, etc., and Greek *άγος*, etc., are unfounded. F. W. Culmann, in his *Das Salben im Morgen- und Abendlande* (Leipzig, 1876), has discussed the etymology of "anointing" in Indo-European and Semitic languages.

include, by analogy, such substances as blood, saliva, honey, mud, pitch, and tar.¹

Anointing usually follows washing or bathing, and completes the toilet of the skin. The action of oil is to produce a sensation of comfort and well-being. Some peoples regard it as conducive to suppleness of the muscles and joints. The Australian aborigines relieve the languor consequent on a long and tiresome journey by rubbing the limbs with grease.² Oil closes the pores of the skin, and partially represses perspiration; hence the use of unguents by the Greeks and Romans before exercise, and after the bath which followed. Similarly, the Hindu anoints himself before bathing. In extremes of heat and cold these properties have an increased value, and anointing is almost a necessary of life in very hot and very cold climates. Being a bad conductor, oil protects the skin against the sun, and also prevents the escape of body heat. It is a useful emollient for burnt or chapped skin, and a valuable food for the nerves.

The cosmetic use soon acquired æsthetic associations. The gloss produced by oil has itself an æsthetic value, which is heightened by the addition of coloured substances. Of the majority of early peoples it may be said that grease and ochre constitute their wardrobe. The use of unguents as the vehicles of perfumes becomes a luxury among the Persians, Hindus, Greeks, and Romans, while among early peoples generally it is a common practice on both ordinary and ceremonial occasions, the object being to render the person attractive. Thus the natives of West Africa grease the body, and powder it over with scented and coloured flour.³ On the Slave Coast, "magical" unguents,

¹ For anointing with blood see H. C. Trumbull, *The Blood Covenant* (Philadelphia, 1893), s.v.

² W. E. Roth, *Ethnological Studies among the North-West Central Queensland Aborigines* (Brisbane and London, 1897), pp. 114, 162.

³ F. Ratzel, *The History of Mankind* (London, 1896-1898), ii. 397, iii. 108.

supplied by the priests, are employed for such purposes as the borrowing of money and the obtaining of a woman's favour.¹ Swahili women use fragrant unguents in order to render themselves attractive.² Similarly, Homer describes how Hera, when desirous to obtain a favour from Zeus, cleansed her skin with ambrosia and anointed herself with fragrant oil.³ In the islands of Torres Straits, the boys, at the close of initiation, are rubbed with a pungent scented substance, which has the property of exciting the female sex.⁴ The Ewe-speaking peoples of West Africa scent the bride with civet, and make her skin red with the bark of the *to*-tree.⁵

Anointing thus stands for physical refreshment, well-being, and personal attractiveness. It is, therefore, naturally regarded as being essential on festal occasions. The Australian native, we are told, is fond of rubbing himself with grease and ochre, especially at times when ceremonies are being performed.⁶ Among the ancient Egyptians,⁷ Greeks, and Romans, unguents, as representing the completion of festal attire, were offered to guests.⁸ In the Homeric age, bathing and anointing formed an indispensable part of welcome.⁹ The use of anointing as a mark of honour naturally ensues. Thus, when a Ceramese warrior has taken

¹ Sir A. B. Ellis, *The Ewe-speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa* (London, 1890), p. 94.

² C. Velten, *Sitte und Gebränche der Suaheli* (Göttingen, 1903), p. 212.

³ Homer, *Iliad*, xiv. 170 *et seq.*

⁴ A. C. Haddon, "The Ethnography of the Western Tribes of Torres Straits," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute* (London, 1890), xix. 412.

⁵ Sir A. B. Ellis, *op. cit.*, p. 156.

⁶ Sir W. B. Spencer and F. J. Gillen, *The Native Tribes of Central Australia* (London, 1899), p. 38.

⁷ Sir J. G. Wilkinson, *The Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians* (London, 1878), i. 425.

⁸ W. R. Smith, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites* (London, 1927), p. 233.

⁹ Homer, *Odyssey*, iii. 466, viii. 454.

his first head, he is anointed with fragrant oil by the young women of his village.¹

Parallel to the cosmetic use of fats and oils is their application to food-stuffs as a "dressing"; to tools, utensils, weapons, furniture, and buildings as a lubricant, preservative, or polish, and to perishable substances as a preservative.²

2. *The Magical-Religious Sphere*

In the magical-religious sphere a further principle makes its appearance. In addition to their cosmetic, sanative, decorative, and other merits, unguents now develop a more potent, though not a specifically distinct, virtue. The principle may be put thus: according to primitive psychology, organic matter and, to some extent, inorganic also, is instinct with a Divine force or vital essence. The chief centres of this are sacred persons, objects, and places; later, the gods and their temples, their representatives and apparatus, play this part. This essence, with its gifts of life or strength, and magical or supernatural power, is transmissible by various methods, primarily contact. Inasmuch as its most obvious and convenient source is the flesh and blood of men and animals, the most direct method of assimilation is provided by eating and drinking; but an equally certain method is external application—a method which, in the form of anointing, is peculiarly adapted to the case of fats and oils. Uncion is thus based upon the same sacramental principle as the practice of eating the flesh and blood of sacred persons and animals. The Divine life is transmitted, and communion with the sacred source is attained, by anointing the worshipper with the sacred essence. Fat

¹ J. G. F. Riedel, *De sluijk- en kroesharige rassen tusschen Celebes en Papua* ('s Gravenhage, 1886), p. 118.

² Sir E. F. Im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana* (London, 1883), p. 314; K. L. Parker, *The Euahlayi Tribe* (London, 1905), p. 123; W. E. Roth, *Ethnological Studies among the North-West Central Queensland Aborigines*. (Brisbane and London, 1897), p. 102.

is the most primitive unguent, and is regarded in early thought as a very important seat of life. Ideas of sacredness are perhaps implicit even in its ordinary use, inasmuch as it is animal-substance.¹ Where the idea of the sacredness of animal life has been developed to an extreme, as amongst the Hindus, animal fat is tabooed.

To take illustrations: the Arabs of East Africa anoint themselves with lions' fat, in order to acquire courage.² The Andamanese pour melted pigs' fat over children to render them strong.³ The Namaquas wear amulets of fat.⁴ The Damaras collect the fat of certain animals, which they believe to possess great virtue. It is kept in special receptacles; "a small portion dissolved in water is given to persons who return home safely after a lengthened absence. . . . The chief makes use of it as an unguent for his body."⁵ The fat of the human body possesses a proportionately higher sanctity and potency. It is especially the fat of the *omentum* that is regarded as possessing this vital force.⁶

The Australian savage will kill a man merely to obtain his kidney-fat with which to anoint himself. It is believed that the virtues of the dead man are transfused into the person by anointing. It is a regular practice throughout Australia to use for this purpose the fat of slain enemies. These natives also employ it to make their weapons strong; sick persons are rubbed with it in order to obtain health and strength.⁷

¹ Ernest Crawley, *The Mystic Rose* ² (London, 1927), *passim*; *id.*, *The Tree of Life* (London, 1905), pp. 110, 223; W. R. Smith, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites* ³ (London, 1927), p. 383.

² J. Becker, *La Vie en Afrique* (Paris and Brussels, 1887), ii. 366.

³ E. H. Man, *The Andaman Islands* (London, 1884), p. 66.

⁴ C. J. Andersson, *Lake Ngami* (London, 1856), p. 330.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 233. ⁶ W. R. Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 383.

⁷ R. B. Smyth, *The Aborigines of Victoria* (London, 1878), i. 102, ii. 289, 313; "On the Habits, etc., of the Aborigines

In India a prevalent superstition relates to the supernatural virtues of *momiāi*, an unguent prepared from the fat of boys murdered for the purpose.¹ Grease made from the fat of a corpse is a potent charm among the Aleuts.² A piece of human kidney-fat, worn round the neck, was believed by the Tasmanians to render a man proof against magic influence.³ The virtues of human fat as a curative and magical ointment are well known throughout the world. By its use love may be charmed, warriors rendered invulnerable, and witches enabled to fly through the air.⁴ Transformation into animals, as related in folk-lore, is effected by magical ointments, originally the fat of the animal in question.

There are two further considerations to be taken into account in treating of the origin of unction. Sacred fat, in the first place, may be regarded as too holy, and therefore too dangerous, to be eaten. External application is a safer method of assimilating its virtues. In the second place, neither fat nor oil is, properly, an article of food in and by itself,⁵ but rather a medium or vehicle. Even in its cosmetic uses, oil is frequently a vehicle only, and when used alone would be regarded as the medium of a hidden virtue. In its sacred applications, therefore, we may take it that the oil of anointing is the vehicle of a sacred or Divine life or vital-essence, which is either inherent in the material or induced thereinto. When the primitive conception of the virtues of human and animal fat decays, the

in district of Powell's Creek, Northern Territory of South Australia," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute* (London, 1895), xxiv. 178; C. Lumholtz, *Among Cannibals* (London, 1889), p. 272; J. Dawson, *Australian Aborigines* (Melbourne, 1881), p. 68.

¹ W. Crooke, *The Popular Religion and Folk-Lore of Northern India* (Westminster, 1896), ii. 176.

² H. H. Bancroft, *The Native Races of the Pacific States of North America* (New York, 1875-1876), iii. 145.

³ J. Bonwick, *Daily Life and Origin of the Tasmanians* (London, 1870), p. 179.

⁴ Apuleius, *Metamorphoses*, III, ii. 1; Lucian, *Lucius*, 12.

⁵ W. R. Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 232, 386.

Divine essence is, as it were, put in commission, and may be transmitted to any unguent by various methods of consecration. Apart from the sacredness which it carries, a holy unguent is distinguished from other vehicles chiefly by its original cosmetic, decorative, sanative, and other properties.

The sacramental principle is thus the controlling factor in the theory of anointing; but it is always possible to trace the connexion between the essence and the accidents of holy oil, between the magical force or supernatural grace and those material properties which, to quote a Catholic theologian, "well represent the effects of this Sacrament; *oleum enim sanat, lenit, recreat, penetrat ac lucet.*"¹ Ceremonial unction in all religions satisfies the condition laid down by Catholic theology for the Catholic rite of unction, the *differentia* of the Sacrament consists in the fact that "the sign of the sacred thing, the visible form of invisible grace" (Augustine), should be "such as to represent it and bring it about."

The methods of transmitting the sacred essence to the unguent are material contact, magical and religious formulas, intention, blessing, and prayer. The results of unction develop from the decorative and sanative through the magical stage to a supernatural consecration, which imparts spiritual refreshment and strength—in Christian doctrine, grace and the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

In the very widely spread use of fats and oils for the treatment of the sick, physical, magical, and religious, ideas shade off into one another imperceptibly. Some typical examples will illustrate the range and the working of these ideas. Thus the Australians use various fats to assist the healing of wounds and sores; but to cure a sick man it is necessary to "sing" the grease with which his body is rubbed.² The shamans

¹ Petrus Deus, *Theologia moralis et dogmatica* (Dublin, 1832), vii. 3.

² K. L. Parker, *The Euahlayi Tribe* (London, 1905), p. 38; Sir W. B. Spencer and F. J. Gillen, *The Native Tribes of*

of Asiatic Russia charm the blubber, reindeer-fat, or bear's-grease with which the body of a patient is anointed.¹ So, more definitely, the Melanesian medicine-man imparts *mana*, magical or spiritual force, to the unguent.² On the other hand, the most powerful unguent in the Chinese pharmacopoeia owes its virtues to gold-leaf. Gold is considered to be the most perfect form of matter, and this unguent transmits life to the human body.³ The unguent employed by the priests of ancient Mexico, when sacrificing on the mountains or in caves, contained narcotics and poisons. It was supposed to remove the sense of fear, and certainly soothed pain. It was used in the treatment of the sick, and was known as "the divine physic."⁴ The holy oil of Ceram Laut may be manufactured only by a boy and a girl who are virgins. A priest superintends and repeats formulas over the oil.⁵ The Amboynese offer oil to the gods. What is left over is returned, and now possesses Divine virtues. It is used to anoint sick and sound alike, and is believed to confer all manner of blessings.⁶

To return to magical ideas, variations of method are seen in the practice of anointing the weapon which dealt the wound;⁷ in the East Indian custom, whereby

Central Australia (London, 1899), pp. 250, 464; W. E. Roth, *Ethnological Studies among the North-West-Central Queensland Aborigines* (Brisbane and London, 1897), pp. 157, 162.

¹ V. M. Mikhailovski, "Shamanism in Siberia and European Russia," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute* (London, 1895), xxiv. 98.

² R. H. Codrington, *The Melanesians* (Oxford, 1891), pp. 198-199.

³ J. J. M. de Groot, *The Religious System of China* (Leyden, 1892, etc.), iv. 331-332.

⁴ J. de Acosta, *The Natural and Moral History of the Indies* (London, 1880), ii. 365-367.

⁵ J. G. F. Riedel, *De sluik- en kroesharige rassen tusschen Celebes en Papua* ('s Gravenhage, 1886), p. 179.

⁶ F. Valentijn, *Oud en nieuw Oost-Indien* (Dordrecht and Amsterdam, 1724-1726), iii. 10.

⁷ Sir J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough*³ (London, 1911-1915), i. 202 *et seq.*

fruits and stones are smeared with oil, and prayer is made that the bullets may rebound from the warriors as rain rebounds from what is covered with oil;¹ and in the Australian superstitions connected with bone-painting. Here it is possible for the user of the magical weapon to release his victim from the wasting sickness he has brought upon him, if he rubs the apparatus on his own body with grease, in some cases giving what is left of the unguent to the sick man.² On the principle of sympathy, a mother will grease her own body daily while her son is recovering from circumcision.³

3. *The Anointing of the Dead*

The anointing of the dead is based on the principle that, as the Chinese say, the dead man "may depart clean and in a neat attire from this world of cares."⁴ Africa,⁵ North America,⁶ and the Fiji and Tonga Islands⁷ supply typical examples of the custom. The corpse is washed, oiled, and dressed in fine clothes. The ancient Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans thus prepared their dead for the last rites. The Egyptians also oiled the head of the mummy;⁸ the Romans poured perfumed oils over the ashes and the tomb. At the annual commemoration of those who fell at Plataea, the Archon washed the grave-stones with water and

¹ C. M. Pleyte, "Ethnographische Beschrijving der Kei-Eilanden," *Tijdschrift van het Koninklijk Nederlandsch Aardrijkskundig Genootschap* (Leyden, 1893), 2 ser. x. 805.

² K. L. Parker, *The Euahlayi Tribe* (London, 1905), p. 32.

³ Sir W. B. Spencer and F. J. Gillen, *The Northern Tribes of Central Australia* (London, 1904), p. 466; *idid.*, *The Native Tribes of Central Australia* (London, 1899), p. 250.

⁴ J. J. M. de Groot, *The Religious System of China* (Leyden, 1892, etc.), i. 6, 20.

⁵ F. Ratzel, *The History of Mankind* (London, 1896-1898), i. 328.

⁶ T. Williams and J. Calvert, *Fiji and the Fijians* (London, 1858), i. 188.

⁷ J. Adair, *The History of the American Indians* (London, 1775), p. 181.

⁸ Sir J. G. Wilkinson, *The Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians* (London, 1878), iii. 363.

anointed them with oil. The Greeks placed in the tomb vessels ($\lambda\chiρυθοι$) containing unguents for the use of the dead.¹ The Kingsmill Islanders, like many other peoples, preserved the skulls of dead relatives. These were oiled and garlanded; food was offered to them as if they were alive.² The pious affection shown in such customs is elsewhere very commonly developed into practices which aim at a closer union with the departed. Thus, in Australia, we find a prevalent custom among mourners of anointing themselves with oil made from the decomposing fat of the corpse.³ This practice has typical examples in the Dutch East Indies,⁴ Africa, and North America. The Creek Indians anoint themselves with oil mingled with the ashes of the dead.⁵ A curious custom obtains in the Aru Islands of the Dutch East Indies. As soon as a man is dead, his widow runs round to the houses of all his friends and smears the doors with oil.⁶

The Catholic rite of Extreme Unction doubtless derives from the general principle of anointing the sick; but, apart from such customs, there would seem to be no definite case elsewhere of the practice of unction immediately before death.

¹ Servius, on Virgil, *Aeneid*, v. 219, ix. 483; Lucian, *De Luctu*, 11; G. F. Schoemann, *Griechische Alterthümer* (Berlin, 1855-1859), ii. 595, 600.

² C. Wilkes, *Narrative of the United States Exploring Expedition during the Years 1838-1842* (Philadelphia and London, 1845), p. 556.

³ Sir W. B. Spencer and F. J. Gillen, *The Northern Tribes of Central Australia* (London, 1904), p. 530; L. Fison and A. W. Howitt, *Kamilaroi and Kurnai* (Melbourne and Sydney, 1880), p. 243.

⁴ J. G. F. Riedel, *De sluik- en kroesharige rassen tusschen Selebes en Papua* ('s Gravenhage, 1886), p. 308.

⁵ H. C. Yarrow, "A Further Contribution to the Study of the Mortuary Customs of the North American Indians," *Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology* (Washington, 1881 for 1879-1880), i. 145, 155.

⁶ J. G. F. Riedel, *op. cit.*, p. 268.

4. *Ceremonial Anointing and the Removal of Taboo*

It will be convenient at this point to draw out the connexion between ceremonial anointing and the principles of taboo. In the first place, grease, oil, and fat are convenient vehicles for the application of ashes, charcoal, and other marks of mourning, and of the red paint that denotes such persons as the shedder of blood and the menstrual woman. These states, being taboo, possess one form of sanctity; but it is a general rule that anointing proper, together with decent apparel, should be discarded during their continuance. Similarly, anointing, with other aids to well-being, is renounced by the ascetic. Differences of cosmetic custom produce exceptions to the rule; thus, among the ancient inhabitants of Central America it was the custom to smear the body with grease as a mark of fasting and penance. During the penitential season which preceded the New Year festival, every man was thus anointed daily; the festal use of paint was resumed as soon as the feast commenced.¹ In the second place, we have to recognize the cleansing powers of unction. Anointing is positive, lustration negative; but this original distinction is not kept intact, for consecrated water not only cleanses, but imparts the Divine life of which it is the vehicle;² and consecrated oil, conversely, both imparts virtue and cleanses, by the action of the Divine life which it carries within it. Early peoples, it must be remembered, employ fat and oil-refuse as a detergent. Anointing thus not only produces the sanctity of consecration, but also removes the sanctity of taboo. In the latter case, its result is re-admission to the normal life (which itself possesses a measure of sanctity),³ and to that extent it brings about a re-consecration of impaired sanctity. The following cases show how unction and lustration tend to assimili-

¹ H. H. Bancroft, *The Native Races of the Pacific States of North America* (New York, 1875-1876), ii. 690, 696.

² W. R. Smith, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites* (London, 1927), p. 190. ³ *Ibid.*, p. 426.

late. The *ghī* of the Hindus is held to purify by virtue of its sacred essence, while the sprinkling with sacred water which constitutes the *abhiṣeka*, or anointing of a king, possesses not only the name but the function of ordinary anointing. The Yoruba "water of purification" is really an unguent, prepared from shea-butter and edible snails.¹ The "neutralizing rice-flour" of the Malays has both positive and negative virtues.² Lastly, in the very widely spread ritual of blood, the material is either sprinkled like water, poured like oil, or smeared like ointment, while the results of the ceremony are both to cleanse and to confer a blessing.

The examples which follow illustrate the use of anointing to remove taboo, and comprise various principles of ceremonial unction. In the Ongtong-Java Islands all strangers are met by the priests immediately on landing. Sand and water are sprinkled about, and the visitors themselves are sprinkled with water, anointed with oil, and girt with pandanus-leaves.³ Galla warriors on returning home are "washed" by the women with fat and butter, and their faces are painted red and white.⁴ Before starting on a journey the Wanjamwesi smears his face with a sort of porridge, and the ceremony is repeated on his return.⁵ The Australian who has smitten his enemy with sickness by the use of the "bone" may release him from the curse by rinsing the magical weapon in water or by rubbing it with fat. Similarly, as noticed above, the operator may produce this result by greas-

¹ Sir A. B. Ellis, *The Yoruba-speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa* (London, 1894), p. 141.

² W. W. Skeat, *Malay Magic* (London, 1900), pp. 77, 376, 385.

³ R. Parkinson, "Zur Ethnographie der Ongtong Java- und Tasman-Inseln," *Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie* (Leyden, 1897), x. 112.

⁴ P. Paulitschke, *Ethnographie Nordost-Afrikas: Die Geistige Cultur der Domākil, Galla und Somál* (Berlin, 1896), p. 258.

⁵ F. Stuhlmann, *Mit Emin Pascha ins Herz von Afrika* (Berlin, 1894), p. 89.

ing his own body.¹ The customs connected with war and slaughter supply remarkable cases of this form of unction. In Ceram Laut, when war is decided upon, the chief anoints the feet of the aggrieved person with oil. It is a kind of consecration. The man then raises the war-cry and rouses the people.² The Illapurinja, "female avenger," among the Central Australians, is rubbed with grease and decorated. On her return, her husband removes the decorations and rubs her afresh with grease.³ The Fijians observed an elaborate ritual for the son of a chief after slaying his first man. He was anointed from head to foot with red turmeric and oil. For three days he lived in seclusion with several other youths, anointed and dressed like himself. They were forbidden to lie down, or sleep, or change their clothes, or enter a house where there was a woman.⁴ In these cases many principles of early thought may be discerned. It is sufficient to note that war is a holy state, and that it must be inaugurated and concluded with ceremonial observance.

The removal of taboo coincides with the renewal of normal life and normal sanctity, and anointing is employed here no less regularly than for the inauguration of a highly sacred state. Thus mourners are anointed, as in Africa⁵ and North America,⁶ when their period of sorrow is ended. Throughout Africa it

¹ W. E. Roth, *Ethnological Studies among the North-West-Central Queensland Aborigines* (Brisbane and London, 1897), p. 157.

² J. G. F. Riedel, *De sluik- en kroesharige rassen tusschen Celebes en Papua* ('s Gravenhage, 1886), p. 158.

³ Sir W. B. Spencer and F. J. Gillen, *The Native Tribes of Central Australia* (London, 1899), pp. 466-468.

⁴ T. Williams and J. Calvert, *Fiji and the Fijians* (London, 1858), i. 56.

⁵ J. Shooter, *The Kafirs of Natal and the Zulu Country* (London, 1857), p. 241.

⁶ H. C. Yarrow, "A Further Contribution to the Study of the Mortuary Customs of the North American Indians," *Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology* (Washington, 1881 for 1879-1880), i. 146.

is the custom to anoint the mother with fat and oil shortly after child-birth. The practice is common throughout the world, after sickness generally, with women after the monthly period, and with children after the ceremonial observances at puberty.¹ The practice in the last instance often takes a peculiar form. In Australia,² for instance, and the Andamans,³ a boy is made free of a forbidden food by the process of having fat rubbed over his face and body.

5. Consecration

Passing now to cases of consecration proper, we find anointing used to inaugurate periodic sacredness, as in rites corresponding to baptism and confirmation, in marriage and in worship. The customs last noted tend to merge into these.

(a) BIRTH

It is a custom of wide extension that the new-born child should be rubbed with oil.⁴ This practice soon becomes ceremonial, and suggests baptismal analogies. The Ovaherero ceremony of naming the child combines

¹ J. Maclean, *A Compendium of Kafir Laws and Customs* (Mount Coke, 1858), pp. 94, 99; D. Macdonald, *Africana* (London, 1882), i. 129; R. E. Dennett, *Notes on the Folklore of the Fjort (French Congo)* (London, 1898), p. 137.

² Sir W. B. Spencer and F. J. Gillen, *op. cit.*, p. 386; A. W. Howitt, "Some Australian Ceremonies of Initiation," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute* (London, 1884), xiii. 455; *id.* "The Jeraeil, or Initiation Ceremonies of the Kurnai Tribe," *ibid.* (1885), xiv. 316.

³ E. H. Man, "The Aboriginal Inhabitants of the Andaman Islands," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute* (London, 1883), xii. 134.

⁴ W. E. Roth, *Ethnological Studies among the North-West-Central Queensland Aborigines* (Brisbane and London, 1897), p. 183; F. Ratzel, *The History of Mankind* (London, 1896-1898), ii. 286; F. Caron, "Account of Japan," in J. Pinkerton, *A General Collection of Voyages and Travels* (London, 1808-1814), vii. 635; Sir A. B. Ellis, *The Yoruba-speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa* (London, 1894), p. 141.

so many principles that it may stand for a typical summary. The rite takes place in the house of the sacred fire, and is performed by the chief man of the village. He first takes a mouthful of water, and spouts this over the bodies of mother and child. Then he addresses the ancestors thus : " To you a child is born in your village ; may the village never come to an end." He then ladles some fat out of a vessel, spits upon it, and rubs it over his hands. He next rubs more fat in his hands, spouting water upon it. Then he anoints the woman. In doing this he crosses his arms, so as to touch with his right hand her right side, and with his left hand her left side. The process is repeated with the child. Finally he gives it a name, while touching its forehead with his own.¹

(b) PUBERTY

The anointing of boys and girls as a preliminary to the ceremonies observed at puberty is of wide extension ; it is most prominent in Australia and Africa. In Central Australia the candidate is rubbed with grease at various times during the protracted ceremonial.² At the circumcision festival of the Masai the boys were allowed to gorge themselves with beef.³ They rubbed the fat over their bodies, much as a Dayak rubs himself with the blood of a pig, or as a carnivorous animal rolls in the flesh of its prey.

(c) MARRIAGE

In the ceremonial of marriage we find typical examples of anointing. The Central Australian, for a

¹ E. Dannert, " Customs of the Ovaherero at the Birth of a Child," *Folk-Lore Journal* (Cape Town, 1880), ii. 67.

² Sir W. B. Spencer and F. J. Gillen, *The Northern Tribes of Central Australia* (London, 1904), pp. 93, 135; *idem.*, *The Native Tribes of Central Australia* (London, 1904), p. 242; R. H. Mathews, " The Bora, or Initiation Ceremonies of the Kamilaroi Tribe," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute* (London, 1895), xxiv. 418.

³ C. J. Andersson, *Lake Ngami* (London, 1856), p. 465.

few days after receiving his wife, rubs her daily with grease and ochre.¹ A few days before marriage the Angola bride is anointed with oil from head to foot, and until she is handed over to her husband she is treated like a queen.² The custom is frequent in Africa, and occurs in Fiji.³ The Malays anoint both bride and bridegroom.⁴ In what amounts to a ceremony of re-marriage, performed after the birth of the first child, the Basuto pair are anointed by a medicine-man with a mixture of roots and fat.⁵ In Australia we find the custom of anointing pregnant women.

(d) BEFORE WORSHIP

As a preliminary to worship, anointing is frequently incumbent on the people, more frequently on the priest. In ancient Greece those who consulted the oracle of Trophonius were washed and anointed with oil.⁶ When a native of the Slave Coast worships the guardian spirit who resides in his head, he rubs his head with oil; the priests anoint themselves before entering the house of the god.⁷ The priests of Mexico and Central America were anointed from head to foot with a sacred unguent, which was also applied to the images of the gods.⁸ Returning to Greece, we learn that

¹ Sir W. B. Spencer and F. J. Gillen, *The Northern Tribes of Central Australia* (London, 1904), pp. 135, 606.

² G. Tarus, *Visit to the Portuguese Possessions in South Western Africa* (London, [1845]).

³ T. Williams and J. Calvert, *Fiji and the Fijians* (London, 1858), i. 169.

⁴ W. W. Skeat, *Malay Magic* (London, 1900), p. 385.

⁵ H. Grützner, "Über die Gebräuche der Basutho," *Verhandlungen der Berliner Gesellschaft für Anthropologie, Ethnologie und Urgeschichte* (Berlin, 1877), p. 78.

⁶ Pausanias, VIII. xix. 2, IX. xxxix. 7.

⁷ Sir A. B. Ellis, *The Yoruba-speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa* (London, 1894), p. 126; *cp. id.*, *The Ewe-speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa* (London, 1890), p. 76.

⁸ J. de Acosta, *The Natural and Moral History of the Indies* (London, 1880), ii. 364; H. H. Bancroft, *The Native Races of the Pacific States of North America* (New York, 1875-1876), ii. 323, iii. 341.

in the feast of Dionysus the men who carried the sacred bull to the temple were anointed and garlanded.¹ An interesting side-light on the theory of anointing reaches us from Fiji² and the Dutch East Indies.³ At shamanistic ceremonies the person into whom the god is to enter is anointed with fragrant oil, by way of rendering him attractive to the deity.

(e) THE CONSECRATION OF PRIESTS

For the special consecration of priests anointing is a not uncommon piece of ritual, obtaining in various parts of the world. The Slave Coast of Africa provides a typical case. The candidate's body is smeared with a decoction of herbs. Then the priests who officiate anoint his head with "a mystical unguent," and ask the god to accept him. If he is accepted, the deity is supposed to enter into him. A new cloth is put upon the ordained novice, and a new name conferred.⁴ Among the Buriats a *shaman* is consecrated by being anointed with the blood of a kid.⁵ In North America, among the Chikasaws, the candidate fasted for some time, and was consecrated by a bath and unction with bear's grease. The Toltecs and Totonacs of Central America consecrated their pontiffs with an unguent made of an india-rubber oil and children's blood. For the anointing of their spiritual king, the Aztecs employed the unguent used at the enthronement of their temporal monarch.⁶ The priests of ancient Egypt were consecrated with holy oil poured upon the head.⁷

¹ Lactantius, *Divinarum Institutionum*, I. xxi. 45.

² T. Williams and J. Calvert, *op. cit.*, i. 224.

³ G. A. Wilken, *Het animisme bij de volken van den Indischen Archipel* (Leiden, 1884-1885), pp. 479-480.

⁴ Sir A. B. Ellis, *The Ewe-speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa* (London, 1890), pp. 143-144.

⁵ V. M. Mikhailovskii, "Shamanism in Siberia and European Russia," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute* (London, 1895), xxiv. 89.

⁶ H. H. Bancroft, *The Native Races of the Pacific States of North America* (New York, 1875-1876), ii. 214, iii. 433, ii. 201.

⁷ Sir J. G. Wilkinson, *The Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians* (London, 1878), iii. 360.

(f) THE ANOINTING OF KINGS

The anointing of kings, with which Semitic and Christian custom has familiarized the world, is a spectacular rite of rare occurrence outside the sphere of Hebrew tradition. It is found, however, in a more or less perfect form among the ancient Egyptians, the Aztecs, and the Hindus ancient and modern. The Pharaoh was anointed after investiture with the sacred robes. The monuments give representations of the ceremony, and in the Tell-el-Amarna letters the king of Cyprus sends to the king of Egypt "a flask of good oil to pour on your head, now that you have ascended the throne of your kingdom."¹ The Aztec ceremony of royal unction preceded coronation. The king-elect went in procession to the temple of Huitzilopochtli. After paying homage to the god, he was anointed throughout his whole body by the high priest, and sprinkled with holy water. He was then clothed in ceremonial robes, and about his neck was hung a gourd containing powerful remedies against sorcery, disease, and treason. The unguent used was the blackfoil with which the priests anointed their own bodies and the images of the gods. Its name is variously given, *ulli*, or *ole*, and its chief constituent was india-rubber juice. The Quichés and Cakchiquels bathed the king at his coronation, and anointed his body with perfumes. Candidates for the order of Tecuhtli, the Garter of the Aztecs, were anointed with the same sacerdotal unguent.²

The anointing of kings and priests combines several principles, and is not to be explained on one separate line of development. It is, in the first place, a part of

¹ Sir J. G. Wilkinson, *loc. cit.*; Sir W. M. Flinders Petrie, *Syria and Egypt from the Tell-el-Amarna Letters* (London, 1898), p. 45; H. Winckler, *The Tell-el-Amarna Letters* (Berlin and London, 1896), p. 87.

² H. H. Bancroft, *op. cit.*, ii. 144-145, 641, 196, iii. 385.

the festal dress essential on such occasions.¹ Secondly, we have the various ideas connected with consecration, —the transmission of sanctity, power, and new life,² on the one hand; and, on the other, the “heding” of a dedicated person with sacredness, for his protection and the performance of his office.

6. *The Anointing of Sacrifice and Offering*

The anointing of sacrifice and offering, the altar and the temple, and the sacred apparatus generally, supplies many details of ritual which fall into line with the main principles of religious unction, while giving prominence to such as are more closely connected with worship. The human sacrifices of the ancient Albanians of the Caucasus,³ of the Aztecs,⁴ and of the people of Timor, were anointed before being slain. The last case has to do with coronation. The princes of Kupang in Timor kept sacred crocodiles, and believed themselves to be descended from this animal. On the day of coronation, a young girl was richly dressed, decorated with flowers, and anointed with fragrant oil, to be offered as a sacrifice to the sacred monsters.⁵ In the remarkable human sacrifice of the Khonds, the *Meriah* was anointed with oil, *ghi*, and turmeric, and adorned with flowers. He received “a species of reverence which it is not easy to distinguish from adoration.” Every one who could touched the oil on the victim’s body and rubbed it on his own head. The oil was regarded as possessing the same virtue as his flesh and blood conferred on the fields.⁶

¹ W. R. Smith, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites* (London, 1927), pp. 233, 453.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 383-384.

³ Strabo, II. iv. 7.

⁴ H. H. Bancroft, *The Native Races of the Pacific States of North America* (New York, 1875-1876), iii. 333.

⁵ P. J. Veth, *Het eiland Timor*, p. 21.

⁶ S. C. Macpherson, *Memorials of Service in India* (London, 1865), p. 118; J. Campbell, *A Personal Narrative of Thirteen Years’ Service amongst the Wild Tribes of Khondistan* (London, 1864), pp. 54-55, 112.

The custom of "dressing" offerings with oil was regular in the worship of the ancient Greeks.¹ When the natives of West Africa sacrifice an animal, they sprinkle it with palm-oil by way of attracting the spirits.² At the festival of the New Fruits among the Creek Indians, the priest took some of each sort and smeared them with oil before offering them to the spirit of fire.³ The people of Gilgit drench with wine, oil, and blood the branch of the sacred cedar used in their agricultural ceremonies.⁴ Similarly, the Malays, in their ceremony of bringing home the Soul of the Rice,⁵ and the Javanese, in the Marriage of the Rice Bride,⁶ anoint the rice with oil.

The natives of Celebes on great occasions anoint the flag and other emblems of state.⁷ The Santals anoint their cattle when celebrating the harvest-home.⁸ The Shans of Indo-China⁹ and the natives of Celebes¹⁰ purify with water and anoint with oil the plough used in their ceremonial ploughing of the rice-fields.

When we pass to cases more definitely representative of worship, we find a development of two ideas: first, that the sacred life immanent in the sacred symbol or

¹ G. F. Schömann, *Griechische Alterthümer* (Berlin, 1855-1859), ii. 236; Pausanias, viii. 42.

² Sir A. B. Ellis, *The Yoruba-speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa* (London, 1894), p. 155.

³ J. Adair, *The History of the American Indians* (London, 1775), p. 96.

⁴ J. Biddulph, *Tribes of the Hindoo Koosh* (Calcutta, 1880), p. 106.

⁵ W. W. Skeat, *Malay Magic* (London, 1900), p. 235.

⁶ P. J. Veth, *Java* (Haarlem, 1886-1907), i. 524.

⁷ G. K. Niemann, "De Boegineezen en Makassaran," *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch Indië* ('s Gravenhage, 1889), 4 ser. iv. 270.

⁸ W. Crooke, *The Popular Religion and Folk-Lore of Northern India* (Westminster, 1896), ii. 308.

⁹ E. Aymonier, "Les Tchames et leur religions," *Revue de l'histoire des religions* (Paris, 1891), xxiv. 272.

¹⁰ B. F. Matthes, *Bijdragen tot de Ethnologie van Zuider-Celebes* ('s Gravenhage, 1875), p. 93.

image needs periodical renewing; and, secondly, that the spirit connected therewith requires conciliation; anointing the sacred object renews its vigour and also brings the worshipper into union with the deity. When the Wawamba of Central Africa¹ or the Australian of Queensland² anoints his sacred stone with fat when asking it for rain, we may infer that the sacred object is supposed to be revived and rendered gracious by the cosmetic virtues of unction. Similarly the Central Australians rub their *churinga* with fat and ochre whenever they examine them. The *churinga* is supposed to have human feelings, and the process of anointing is said to "soften" it.³ Here the use of grease for utensils combines with cosmetic anointing. In many cases it is natural to find these ideas merging in the notion of feeding the divine object; but it would be incorrect to derive the anointing of sacred stones from the practice of feeding the god. The custom of smearing blood upon sacred symbols and images is of wide extension, but it is not a survival from any practice of pouring the blood into the mouth of an image. The practical primitive mind does not confuse anointing with nutrition, though well aware that the two are allied. As illustrating the extension of the custom, a few examples are here brought forward. The Greeks and Romans washed, anointed, and garlanded their sacred stones. The *εὑφαλός* of Delphi was periodically anointed and wrapped in wool.⁴ The Malagasy anoint

¹ F. Stuhlmann, *Mit Emin Pascha ins Herz von Afrika* (Berlin, 1894), p. 654.

² W. E. Roth, *Ethnological Studies among the North-West-Central Queensland Aborigines* (Brisbane and London, 1897), p. 158.

³ Sir W. B. Spencer and F. J. Gillen, *The Northern Tribes of Central Australia* (London, 1904), pp. 255, 265, 270; *op. idd.*, *The Native Tribes of Central Australia* (London, 1899), p. 161.

⁴ G. F. Schömann, *Griechische Alterthümer* (Berlin, 1855-1859), ii. 236; Lucian, *Alexander*, 30; Apuleius, *Florida*, i. 1; Minucius Felix, *Octavius*, 3; Pausanias, x. 24; Sir J. G. Frazer, *Pausanias's Description of Greece* (London, 1898), v. 354-355.

sacred stones with fat or oil or the blood of victims.¹ The Wakamba neat-herd anoints a rock with oil and offers fruit, in order to get his cattle through a difficult pass.² This combination of nutrition and unction is found among the Kei islanders; every family here possesses a sacred black stone, and to obtain success in war or trade a man anoints this with oil and offers fruits to it.³ In Celebes, sacred images, apparatus, and buildings are smeared with oil by worshippers.⁴ The ancient Egyptians anointed the statues of the gods, applying the unguent with the little finger of the left hand.⁵ The Arval Brothers anointed the image of their goddess, *Dea Dia*, on festival days. At the ceremony of mourning for the dead god, the stone image of Attis was anointed. This was probably the unction of the dead. When the image was brought out from the tomb on the day of Resurrection, the priest anointed the throats of the worshippers. The religion of ancient Greece provides a curious instance of the meeting of the practical and the religious spheres. The old temple-statues of the gods, made of wood, were rubbed with oil to preserve them from decay, while to preserve the magnificent creations of gold and ivory, such as the image of Zeus at Olympia, oil was run in pipes throughout the statue.⁶

The principle of communion with the deity by means of anointing the sacred symbol or the worshipper

¹ J. Sibree, *Madagascar and its People* (London, 1870), p. 305.

² J. M. Hildebrandt, "Ethnographische Notizen über Wakámba und ihre Nachbaren," *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* (Berlin, 1878), x. 384.

³ J. G. F. Riedel, *De sluijk- en kroesharige rassen tusschen Celebes en Papua* ('s Gravenhage, 1886), p. 223.

⁴ B. F. Matthes, *Bijdragen tot de Ethnologie van Zuider-Celebes* ('s Gravenhage, 1875), p. 94.

⁵ Sir J. G. Wilkinson, *The Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians* (London, 1878), iii. 361.

⁶ *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, vi. 9797; Firmicus, *De Errori*, 23; Pausanias, v. 11, and Sir J. G. Frazer's commentary *ad loc.*

himself is more apparent in the elementary stages of worship. The Assiniboins, we are told, venerate the bear, and try to keep on good terms with him. They pray to him when they wish to be successful in a bear-hunt, and so to secure a good supply of bear's flesh to eat and of the bear's grease with which they are always anointed.¹ The natives of Central Australia, at the *Intichiuma* ceremony for maintaining the supply of kangaroos, eat a little of the flesh of this animal and anoint their bodies with the fat. In order to obtain success in hunting emus, they rub themselves with stones supposed to be parts of that animal. Similarly, before eating snakes they rub their arms with snake fat.² At a higher stage of development we find the West African negro anointing that part of his own body where his guardian spirit resides.³

The oil of anointing, as we have seen, transmits the sacredness latent within it in either of two directions —to the worshipper or to the god. If we look at the controlling source of its virtue, the potentially sacred substance of the human body, and compare the earliest forms of consecration, we see that the theory of anointing leads us back to pre-theistic and even pre-fetishistic times. The elementary stages of dedication illustrate the less common direction of anointing, in which the worshipper or the priest confers sanctity instead of receiving it. The dedication, more or less informal, of sacred buildings and apparatus by anointing, obtained in Egypt, Greece, and Italy; it is remarkably prominent in India, ancient and modern, but does not appear to have been general elsewhere. It is, of course, connected with the use of oil for tools, utensils, and

¹ P. J. de Smet, *Western Missions and Missionaries* (New York, 1863), p. 139.

² Sir W. B. Spencer and F. J. Gillen, *The Native Tribes of Central Australia* (London, 1899), p. 206; *cp. idd.*, *The Northern Tribes of Central Australia* (London, 1904), pp. 182, 255.

³ Sir A. B. Ellis, *The Yoruba-speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa* (London, 1894), pp. 126-127.

furniture, but also has associations with fetishistic methods of making gods.¹ The ritual of renewing the sacred vigour of a sacred symbol has already been referred to; here we note the original induction. Thus every man on the Gold Coast makes for himself a *suhman*, or tutelary deity. When he has made it, he anoints it with butter.² Among the Bataks the *guru* inducts a spirit into the fetish with various ceremonies, chief among which is the application of a vegetable unguent.³ But the Central Australian, rubbing a newly-made *churinga* with fat, is an unconscious exponent of the embryonic stage of consecration by unction.

In its latest developments anointing passes into a theological metaphor of *quasi-doctrinal* import. Spiritual unction carries with it from the sacramental to the ethical-religious plane the various gifts of consecration, leaving in its course such traces of mysticism as "the White Ointment from the Tree of Life," found in the baptismal formula of the Ophites, and Justin's adaptation of Plato's fancy, to the effect that the Creator impressed the Soul of the Universe upon it as an unction in the form of a χ .⁴

To sum up the history of anointing in its connexion with religion, we see that of all sacramental media the sacred unguent is the most spiritual, and that from beginning to end holy unction is the least material of all purely physical modes of assimilating the Divine. Its characteristic is soul.

7. Hindu Anointing and Consecration

As we have observed more than once, the Hindu use of anointing is the most comprehensive known to

¹ Ernest Crawley, *The Tree of Life* (London, 1905), p. 232.

² Sir A. B. Ellis, *The Tshi-speaking Peoples of the Gold Coast of West Africa* (London, 1887), pp. 100-101.

³ B. Hagen, "Beiträge zur Kenntniß der Battareligion," *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* (Batavia and 's Gage, 1883), xxviii. 525; B. F. Matthes, *Bijdragen tot de Ethnologie van Zuid-Celebes* ('s Gravenhage, 1875), p. 94.

⁴ Justin, *Apologia*, i. 60; Plato, *Timaeus*, 36.

us. Unguents have been in regular use from the earliest times for every form of cosmetic, luxurious, medicinal, and ceremonial unction. Cosmetic and medicinal oils and pastes are found in greater number and variety in India than in any other country, though animal fats are there, of course, prohibited. Scented and coloured preparations are frequent; for ceremonial purposes sandal-paste or oil, oil and turmeric, and *ghī* are chiefly used. Sandal-oil is popular on account of its fragrance; *ghī* and turmeric are extensively employed in medicine and cookery; turmeric and mustard-oil possess invigorating properties. Oil is applied to the head and body before and frequently after the bath. The practice is said to invigorate the system, and it is noted in the ancient literature that diseases do not approach the man who takes physical exercise and anoints his limbs with oil. Infants are well rubbed with mustard-oil, and are then exposed to the sun; it is asserted, on scientific authority, that the practice is a preventive of consumption. The hair is always well pomaded, coconut-oil being chiefly used. Sandal- or rose-water is offered to guests; and this custom (*mālaya-chandana*) is the ancient *arghya*. During mourning and sickness anointing is discontinued, also on fast-days, on visits to sacred places, by Brāhmans in the stage of life as student or ascetic, and by women during menstruation. At the conclusion of her period a woman is rubbed with saffron-oil; and anointing, more or less ceremonial, marks recovery from sickness and the end of mourning.¹

¹ U. C. Dutt, *The Materia Medica of the Hindus* (Calcutta, 1900), pp. 13 *et seq.*, 225; J. E. Padfield, *The Hindu at Home* (Madras, 1896), p. 90; A. F. R. Hoernle, *The Bower MS.* (Calcutta, 1893-1912), *passim*; W. Ward, *A View of the History, Literature, and Religion of the Hindoos* (London, 1817-1820), i. 92, 275, iii. 345; Bhagvat Sinh Jee, *Aryan Medical Science*, pp. 45, 62; Lāl Behāri Day, *Govinda Sāmantaka* (London, 1874), p. 57; J. A. Dubois, *Hindu Manners, Customs, and Ceremonies*² (Oxford, 1899), pp. 188, 713; *The Laws of Manu*, ii. 177; Sir M. Monier-Williams, *Brāhmanism and Hinduism*⁴ (London, 1891), pp. 153, 307; Rājendralāla

Magical unguents, to which potency was given by *mantras*, were and still are used to inspire love, and to prevent or cure evil and disease. A still prevalent superstition is that of *momiāi*, the essential element of which is an unguent, as we have already noted, prepared from the fat of a boy murdered for the purpose. This is believed to heal wounds and to render the body invulnerable. The *amṛta* oil made men strong and women lovely; it ensured offspring, averted misfortune, promoted prosperity, and guaranteed long life. Its manufacture was preceded by purificatory rites. The Brāhman, when about to anoint himself, should think of the *Chirañjīvins* ("the long-lived"), seven half-divine persons.

At the hair-parting ceremony (*śimantonnayana*), performed during pregnancy, the woman is bathed and fragrant oil is poured on her head. Immediately after birth the child is rubbed with warm mustard-oil. The tonsure (*chāula*) takes place at the age of three; the child is anointed with oil and washed. Girls, on arriving at puberty, are decorated and anointed with oil, or oil and tumeric (*haridrā*). Brāhman boys, on investiture with the thread, are similarly anointed with oil and *haridrā*.¹ The ceremony of *gātraharidrā* is performed during the preliminary marriage-rites and on the wedding-day. Bride and bridegroom are anointed with oil and turmeric. The "sandal-wood stone," which they have to touch with their feet, is rubbed with oil. The bride's brother smears the

Mitra, *Indo-Aryans* (London and Calcutta, 1881), i. 434, 439, ii. 17 *et seq.*; S. C. Bose, *The Hindoos as they are* (London and Calcutta, 1881), pp. 17, 23.

¹ H. Oldenberg, *Die Religion des Veda* (Berlin, 1894), pp. 499, 513; A. F. R. Hoernle, *op. cit.*, ii. 104 *et seq.*; J. A. Dubois, *op. cit.*, pp. 23, 86, 160, 273; Sir M. Monier-Williams, *op. cit.*, p. 357; W. Ward, *op. cit.*, i. 74; S. C. Bose, *op. cit.*, p. 86; in general, A. Hillebrandt, *Rituallitteratur. Vedicche Opfer und Zauber* (Grundriss der Indo-Arischen Philologie und Altertumskunde, III. Band, 2 Heft [Strassburg, 1897]), pp. 43, 49, 62, 67.

hands of the bride with *ghī*, and sprinkles parched rice upon them. At a *Yānādi* wedding the mothers of the contracting parties anoint them with oil, turmeric, and sandal-paste. They then bathe and put on new clothes.¹ Among the Kaunādiyans the village barber sprinkles *ghī* over the heads of the bridal pair, who afterwards take an oil bath.² For the *sindūrdān*, sandal-paste, blood, or vermillion are chiefly used. Oil or paste is a common medium for sacred marks.

After death the body is washed and anointed with sandal-paste, oil, and turmeric or *ghī*. In some cases the chief mourner touches each aperture of the body with his lips, repeats a *mantra*, and pours *ghī* on each. The forehead of a dying man is, if possible, smeared with the sacred mud of the Ganges. At the burial of the urn the chief mourner anoints himself with *ghī*. At the ordination of a Buddhist priest his hair is touched with oil before being cut.³

The important ceremony of *abhiṣeka*, the royal baptism or consecration, is in principle a form of unction; the holy water, with its numerous ingredients, consecrates rather by infusion of divine force than by lustration. This rite was celebrated towards the close of the protracted ceremonies of the *rājasūya*. The proper time for its celebration was the new moon after the full moon of Phālguna, that is, about the end of March. Eighteen ingredients were necessary, the chief being the water of the sacred river Sarasvatī. The others included *ghī*, milk, cow-dung, honey, sugar, sandal-water, perfumes, earths, turmeric, and rice-meal. The *adhvaryu* mixed them from the eighteen

¹ Edgar Thurston, "Some Marriage Customs in Southern India," *Bulletin [of the] Madras Government Museum* (Madras, 1903), iv. 156.

² *Ibid.*, iv. 152.

³ Lāl Behāri Day, *op. cit.*, pp. 126-127; J. A. Dubois, *op. cit.*, pp. 50-51, 188, 227, 336, 492; S. Mateer, *Native Life in Travancore* (London, 1883), p. 88; S. C. Bose, *op. cit.*, pp. 50-51, 250; W. Ward, *op. cit.*, i. 168-169, 176, iii. 354; Sir M. Monier-Williams, *op. cit.*, pp. 298, 363; Rājendralāla Mitra, *op. cit.*, ii. 144.

pitchers in a bucket of *udumbara* wood, repeating a *mantra* at every stage; for instance, "O honeyed water, whom the Devas collected, thou mighty one, thou begotten of kings, thou enlivener; with thee Mitra and Varuna were consecrated, and India was freed from his enemies; I take thee." Or, "O water, thou art naturally a giver of kingdoms, grant a kingdom to my *Yajamāna*" (naming the king). Or, "O honeyed and divine ones, mix with each other for the strength and vigour of our *Yajamāna*." The king, after a preliminary sprinkling, put on a bathing-dress, the inner garment of which was steeped in *ghī*, and took his seat on a stool covered with a tiger-skin, facing the east, and, as the pouring commenced, raised his arms. On his head was a rose-head of gold, through which the sacred liquid was to spread in a shower. The contents of the one bucket were transferred to four; these the *adhvaryu*, the Brāhman priest, a *kṣatriya*, and a *vaiśya* poured in turn over the head of the king from their respective positions. *Mantras* were recited, such as, "O *Yajamāna*, I bathe thee with the glory of the moon; may you be king of kings among kings.

. . . O ye well worshipped Devas, may you free him from all his enemies, and enable him to discharge the highest duties of the *Kṣatriya*. . . ." At the close the Brāhman said, "Know ye that he has this day become your king; of us Brāhmaṇas Soma is the king."¹

Noteworthy details are the prayers to the "divine Quickeners," the belief that the gods consecrated the king, and that through the rite he was filled with divine force. The essence of water is vigour; this and the vitalizing essence of all the ingredients of the sacred liquid enter into him. One *mantra* states that he is sprinkled with priestly dignity.² The hair of the king

¹ Rājendralāla Mitra, *Indo-Aryans* (London and Calcutta, 1881), ii. 3, 37 *et seq.*, 46 *et seq.*

² H. Oldenberg, *Die Religion des Veda* (Berlin, 1894), pp. 428, 472; *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, V. iii. iii.; A. Weber, *Über die königsweihe, den Rājasūya* (Berlin, 1893), pp. 4, 33-34, 42-45, 110-117.

was not to be cut until a year had elapsed. Three forms of *abhiṣeka* are mentioned: *abhiṣeka* for kings, *piṇḍabhiṣeka* for superior kings, and *mahābhiṣeka* for emperors. According to the *Vārāha Purāṇa*, a man may perform the ceremony on himself in a simplified form: "He who pours sesamum-seed and water on his head from a right-hand *sankha* destroys all the sins of his life."

A modified form of *abhiṣeka* is still employed at the coronation of Rājahs. In Assam, for instance, the water for the ceremony is taken from nine holy places, and is mingled with the juices of plants. A similar account is given of coronation in Mysore. In Rājputāna the ceremony is unction rather than baptism. A mixture of sandal-paste and attar of roses is the unguent employed, and a little of this is placed on the forehead with the middle finger of the right hand. The royal jewels are then tied on.¹

As in Vedic times, the Brāhmaṇa washes and anoints himself with oil or *ghī* before performing religious duties. The institutor of a ceremony also anoints himself. On the first day of the festival *Sankrānti* it is the custom for every one to take a bath, in which rubbing the body with oil forms a conspicuous feature. In the *mirūḍha-paśubandha* rite the tree from which the sacrificial post was to be cut was anointed, and the victim, after being rubbed with oil and turmeric and washed, was anointed with *ghī* just before the sacrifice. In the *Yagñā* sacrifice the ram is rubbed with oil, bathed, covered with *akṣatas* and garlanded.² At the *Durgāpūjā* festival a plantain tree is bathed and anointed with several kinds of scented oils.

¹ Rājendralāla Mitra, *op. cit.*, ii. 46 *et seq.*, i. 286; B. Hamilton, in W. Martin, *Eastern India* (1838), iii. 611; L. Bowring, *Eastern Experiences* (London, 1871), p. 393; Edward Balfour, *Encyclopædia of India and of Eastern and Southern Asia* (Madras, 1857), s.v. "Anointing."

² H. Oldenberg, *op. cit.*, p. 398; Rājendralāla Mitra, *op. cit.*, i. 369-370; J. A. Dubois, *Hindu Manners, Customs, and Ceremonies* (Oxford, 1899), p. 518.

The consecration of buildings by means of unction is a well-developed feature of Hindu ritual. There is a ceremony analogous to the laying of foundation-stones, in which a piece of wood (*sariku*) is decorated and anointed, being thereby animated with the spirit of the god Vāstupurusha, who becomes the tutelary deity of the house. Again, when the principal entrance is put up, the woodwork is anointed with sandal-oil and worshipped. The same ceremony is performed over the ridge-plate and the well, and for the house generally, when first entered.

The images of the gods in the temples are bathed, anointed, and dressed by the priests daily. Unguents for this purpose (*vilepana*) are one of the "essential offerings" presented by worshippers. Sacred stones are also anointed and decorated; and the worshippers of Śiva anoint the *linga*.¹

The principle of consecration is well brought out in the Hindu ritual of anointing, while the allied principles of decoration and purification are fully recognized.

¹ S. C. Bose, *The Hindoos as they are* (London and Calcutta, 1881), pp. 101-102; Sir M. Monier-Williams, *Brahmanism and Hinduism* (London, 1891), pp. 197, 221, 420, 443; B. H. Hodgson, *Essays on the Languages, Literature, and Religion of Nepal and Tibet* (London, 1874), p. 140; J. Wilson, "Account of the Wáralis and Kátodís,—two of the Forest Tribes of the Northern Konkan," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (London, 1843), vii. 20; E. Moor, "Account of an hereditary living Deity, to whom devotion is paid by the Bramins of Poona and its neighbourhood," *Asiatick Researches* (Calcutta, 1801), vii. 394; J. A. Dubois, *op. cit.*, p. 589; *Mahānirvāna Tantra*, v. 91.

III

THE SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY OF DRESS

(a) *The Dress of Mystery*

THE results of the free play of the social mind on the subject of dress in magical, religious, and moral opinion and ritual may be introduced by some such observation as that early folk-lore regards weaving as a mystical art.¹ In other words, the operation has significance, attracts attention, and may inspire wonder. But the ultimate reason is merely that it is outside the normal plane of ordinary human or, more exactly, animal activity. It is not because there is any reference either to dress or to magic.

The invention of fairy tales illustrates, by extravagant emphasis, various ideas connected with dress, but overlaid with that secondary form of magical belief which is merely æsthetic, literary, or generally fanciful. Stories of magical dresses² are numerous. The *motif* illustrates either the connexion of dress with personality or the use of dress as a protection, disguise, or honour. There is, for instance, the shirt of snowy whiteness, which turns black when the owner dies.³ The emphasis on sympathetic connexion is constant. The shirt which never needs mending while the wearer remains faithful⁴ is a contrast to the shirt of Nessus.

In German folk-lore a shirt spun and stitched by a maiden who has kept silence for seven years can undo spells and render the wearer spell-proof.⁵ St. Theresa

¹ W. Crooke, "The Wooing of Penelope," *Folk-lore* (1898), ix. 124. ² *Ibid.*, ix. 129.

³ M. R. Cox, *Cinderella* (1892), *passim*.

⁴ W. Crooke, *op. cit.*, ix. 130.

⁵ Grimm, *Teutonic Mythology* (1880-1888), iii. 1098-1099.

was presented by the Virgin with an invisible cope which guarded her from sin.¹ The clothes and caps which make invisible were familiar subjects of medieval lore. Malay folk-lore tells of the cloth, *sansistah kallah*, "which weaves itself, and adds one thread yearly of fine pearls, and when that cloth shall be finished the world will be no more."² An old-time raja "wore the trousers called *beraduwanggi*, miraculously made without letting in pieces," also a waistband of flowered cloth, which thrice a day changed colour—"in the morning transparent as dew, at mid-day of the colour of *lembayong* [purple], and in the evening of the hue of oil." His *sarong* was "a robe of muslin of the finest kind; . . . it had been woven in a jar in the middle of the ocean by people with gills, relieved by others with beaks; no sooner was it finished than the maker was put to death, so that no one might be able to make one like it. . . . If it were put in the sun it got damper, if it were soaked in water it became drier."³

The idea that dress is a secondary skin, an outer bodily surface, has a connexion with many stories of metamorphosis. A Javanese magician transforms himself into a tiger by means of a miraculous *sarong*, the Malay garment, half robe and half shirt. This is believed to have such marvellous elasticity that at first it will only cover his great toes, but it stretches till it covers the whole body. It resembles in texture and colour the hide of the Bengal tiger. When it is on, a few muttered charms complete the transformation of the magician into a tiger.⁴

(b) Dress and Personality

One of the simplest cases of association is the idea that a person may be represented by his dress.

¹ *The Quarterly Review* (1883), p. 413.

² W. W. Skeat, *Malay Magic* (1900), p. 29.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 29-30.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 161.

Dress is here analogous to the name, the effigy, and the image. In China, when a man dies in a foreign land, he is buried in the form of his clothes. The soul is summoned, and then the burial of the evoked soul takes place. In the case, for instance, of an empress in ancient times, her soul was to be evoked "with the aid of her sacrificial robe; then this robe must be placed on a soul-carriage . . . then the dress must be taken to the sacrificial hall . . . be covered with a corpse-pall, and finally be buried."¹ If the son of a dead Chinese cannot attend the funeral, he is represented by a suit of sackcloth garments carried on a tray in the procession.² At a Celebes festival, a woman's and a man's dress represent deceased ancestors.³ Among the Eskimo the first child born after a death represents the dead man. These namesakes eat and drink the provisions and wear the clothes offered to the dead at feasts, on their behalf. At the end the shades are sent back wearing the spiritual essence of the clothes, while the gross substance is kept by the namesakes.⁴ When the office of high priest in Tonga was vacant, the priestly dress was placed on a chair, and yams were offered to it. It was regarded as an equivalent for the person.⁵ If a Zulu lightning-doctor is unable to attend a case, he sends his blanket to be placed in front of the storm as an equivalent for himself.⁶

Bathing in clothes⁷ is a form of ceremonial purification which shows the connexion of dress and person. If dress is a part of personality, it follows that it must

¹ J. J. M. de Groot, *The Religious System of China* (Leyden, 1892, etc.), iii. 847, 853. ² *Ibid.*, i. 193.

³ B. F. Matthes, *Binnenlanden van Celebes* (1856), p. 5.

⁴ E. W. Nelson, "The Eskimo about Bering Strait," *Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology* (1899), xviii., pt. i. 363-379, 424-425.

⁵ S. S. Farmer, *Tonga and the Friendly Islands* (1855), p. 134.

⁶ H. Callaway, *The Religious System of the Amarulu* (Natal, 1868), p. 278. ⁷ *The Laws of Manu*, xi. 175.

share in the duties imposed on the natural body. Similarly, if the soul of a dead person is a replica of his ordinary personality in life, the soul after the death of the body is regarded as wearing clothes. This was, for instance, the case with the Egyptian *ka*.

The anointing of garments is a practice found in fashion, ritual, and ordinary life.¹ As a detail of full dress, the wedding garments of the Masai bride are oiled before being put on.² The robes of the Hebrew high priest, no less than his head and person, were anointed with the sacred oil.³ The hygienic purpose of oiling the skin is also fulfilled by oiling the garments worn.

In many cases the dress is not merely a representative symbol of the person, but a usable substitute for a more or less sacred and therefore unusable reality. A Masai man swears to the truth of a statement "by my sister's garment," a woman "by my father's garment."⁴ The converse of this idea may be seen when regalia or royal robes are more sacred than the person of the monarch. These associations, in connexion with the innate love of finery, are concerned in certain observances during sickness and at death. In serious illness, a Mongol's best clothes and ornaments are spread round him in order to tempt the absent soul to return.⁵ A similar practice is recorded of the Greenlanders and the Todas.⁶ In China "a coat belonging to the sick man, and very recently worn, is suspended on a bamboo." Incantations are performed to induce the errant soul to enter the coat. When the pole turns round in the hands of the holder, the soul has arrived, and the coat is placed on the

¹ Crawley-Besterman, *Studies of Savages and Sex* (1929), pp. 187 ff.

² A. C. Hollis, *op. cit.*, p. 303.

³ Exodus xxix. 7, 21.

⁴ A. C. Hollis, *op. cit.*, p. 345.

⁵ A. Bastian, *Die Seele* (1860), p. 36.

⁶ D. Cranz, *The History of Greenland* (1820), i. 237; W. E. Marshall, *A Phrenologist amongst the Todas* (1873), p. 171.

sick man's body.¹ For the Chinese ceremony of "calling back the dead," the dead man's favourite costume is employed. The idea is to entice the soul into it, for it should be "inclined to slip into such of its garments as it had been proud to wear during life." The dress is held out by a mourner, crying "Ho! come back." Then, the soul being supposed to have entered, it is placed on the body of the dead man.² The Mongols try to persuade the soul of a sick man to return by putting out his best clothes, washed and perfumed.³ The Maoris enticed the soul of a dead chief by the bait of a piece of its body or its clothes, in order to instal it in the *Wahi Tapu*.⁴ Souls are commonly charmed into a cloth or caught in the same receptacle.⁵ The custom of dressing the dead in his best clothes may often be based on similar associations (see below).

The principle of impersonation is easily applied to dress. Particular cases are assimilation to totemic or other animals, and may be regarded as a fusion of personalities, or rather the assumption, in the non-technical sense, of a secondary personality. The natives of the Upper Congo blacken their faces with oil and charcoal in resemblance of a species of monkey; they explain that by so doing they derive "monkey cunning."⁶ Bechuana warriors wear the hair of a hornless ox in their hair and the skin of a frog on their cloak, that they may be as hard to hold as are these animals.⁷ The Bororo of Brazil regard themselves as being identical with red-plumaged birds. They

¹ J. Doolittle, *Social Life of the Chinese* (New York, 1867), i. 150-151.

² J. J. M. de Groot, *op. cit.*, i. 246 ff.

³ A. Bastian, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

⁴ R. Taylor, *Te ika a Maui* (2nd edition, 1870), p. 101.

⁵ Ernest Crawley, *The Idea of the Soul* (1909), pp. 126, 135-136.

⁶ H. Ward, "Ethnographical Notes relating to the Congo Tribes," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute* (1895), xxiv. 293.

⁷ E. Casalis, *The Basutos* (1861), p. 272.

decorate themselves with their feathers.¹ All African tribes, says Schweinfurth (but the statement needs considerable qualification), imitate in their attire some animal, especially those for which they have "reverence." "In this way it frequently happens that their superstition indirectly influences the habits of their daily life, and that their animal-worship finds expression in their dress."² Among the Vaydas of Cutch the bridegroom is dressed as a monkey when he goes to the house of the bride.³

The purposes of impersonation are naturally manifold, and require no general illustration. When a sick Eskimo child is made to wear a dog's harness, and is consecrated as a dog to the goddess Sedna,⁴ the idea is, no doubt, change of condition as resulting from change of personality.

On a similar principle, the Galelareese, concluding that a barren tree is a male, turn it into a female by placing a woman's petticoat upon it.⁵

Assimilation of dress to person has innumerable gradations, passing ultimately into identity or duplication. The principle is complicated by the belief that inanimate objects have souls. There is an Irish belief that the clothes of a dead man wear out more quickly than those of a living man.⁶ The Hindus hold that the dress and ornaments of the gods and deified mortals do not decay.⁷ Garments, like other inanimate articles, have souls, as in Fijian and Tongan belief.

¹ K. von den Steinen, *Unter den Naturvölkern Zentral-Brasiliens* (1894), pp. 352, 512.

² G. Schweinfurth, *The Heart of Africa* (2nd edition, 1874), i. 406.

³ W. Crooke, *Popular Religion and Folk-lore of North India* (2nd edition, 1896), ii. 154.

⁴ Sir J. G. Frazer, *Totemism and Exogamy* (1910), iv. 208.

⁵ M. J. van Baarda, "Fabelen, Verhalen en Overleveringen der Galelareezen," *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indië* (1895), xlvi. 489.

⁶ F. D. Bergen, "Burial and Holiday Customs and Beliefs of the Irish Peasantry," *Journal of American Folk-lore* (1895), viii. 21.

⁷ Sir M. Monier-Williams, *op. cit.*, p. 235.

(c) *Magical Associations*

All the ideas and practices of sympathetic magic are abundantly illustrated by dress. A few typical cases may be cited. Among the Torajdas of Celebes, when the men are on campaign, those remaining behind may not put off their garments or head-dress, lest the warrior's armour may fall off.¹ The principle of like producing like is frequently applied. A Malay woman explained that her reason for stripping the upper part of her body when reaping rice was in order to make the rice-husks thinner.² During the festival of the Mexican "long-haired mother," the maize-goddess, women danced with their long hair unbound, that the tassel of the maize might grow in equal profusion.³ In a Kashmir story, a weaver offers the king some cloth for a shroud. The king held that the man wished his death.⁴ A rain-maker in Mabuiag paints himself white and black, with the explanation "All along same as clouds, black behind, white he go first." A woman's petticoat also is put on to signify clouds.⁵ In ancient India, the Brāhman rain-maker wore black garments and ate black food. He had to touch water thrice a day.⁶ Generally it is a rule that to make rain the operator must himself be wet, to make dry weather he must be dry. "Who drives fat oxen should himself be fat."

Magical injury is effected upon a person by means of his dress, as having been in contact with or as representing him. The practice of injuring or slaying a man by burning or otherwise destroying fragments

¹ Sir J. G. Frazer, *Early History of the Kingship* (1905), p. 61.

² W. W. Skeat, *op. cit.*, p. 248.

³ E. J. Payne, *op. cit.*, i. 421.

⁴ J. H. Knowles, *Folk-tales of Kashmir* (1888), p. 266.

⁵ A. C. Haddon, "The Ethnography of the Western Tribes of Torres Straits," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute* (1890), xix. 401.

⁶ H. Oldenberg, *Religion des Veda* (Berlin, 1894), pp. 420-421.

of his clothes or food, and the like, is world-wide.¹ A rejected lover in Burma gets an image of the lady, containing a piece of her clothes or of something she has worn. This is then hanged or drowned.² A Wotjobaluk wizard would roast a man's opossum-skin rug before a fire, in order to make him ill or die. The only cure was to soak the rug in water, when the sick man felt cooler and recovered.³ The Tannese wizard practised a similar method with a cloth which contained the sweat.⁴ Prussian folk-lore has it that if you cannot catch a thief you may get hold of a garment he has dropped in his flight. If this is beaten soundly, the thief falls sick.⁵ The last case suggests that the dress is regarded as a part of personality, or an exterior and superficial layer of personality. The practices illustrated above are perhaps better explained on this principle than on the hypothesis that things once in contact retain a magical continuity.

The converse method of enforced assimilation produces intimacy and identity by means of dress. To obtain a favour or to conciliate feeling, a Zulu gets some article or fragment from the person he has in mind, and wears it next his skin.⁶

More numerous are cases of actual transmission of properties by means of dress. A South Slavonian woman who desires a child puts a chemise on a fruitful tree. Next morning she places it on her own person.⁷

¹ J. G. F. Riedel, *De Sluik- en kroesharige rassen tusschen Selebes en Papua* (The Hague, 1886), pp. 61, 79, 451; E. Aymonier, *Le Cambodge* (Paris, 1900-1904), p. 166; J. Dawson, *Australian Aborigines* (Melbourne, 1881), p. 54.

² C. J. F. S. Forbes, *British Burma* (1878), p. 232.

³ A. W. Howitt, "On Australian Medicine-Men," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute* (1887), xvi. 28-29.

⁴ B. T. Somerville, "Notes on some Islands of the New Hebrides," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute* (1894), xxiii. 19.

⁵ Tettau-Temme, *Volkssagen Ostpreussens* (Berlin, 1837), pp. 383-384. ⁶ H. Callaway, *op. cit.*, p. 142.

⁷ F. S. Krauss, *Volksglaube und religiöser Branch der Südslaven* (1890), p. 35.

According to Swiss folklore, the dress of a dead child will kill any child who wears it.¹ Such examples need not be multiplied, but their interpretation cannot be found merely in the idea of contagion of physical or magical properties. For early thought it is an obvious inference that a man's nature " inheres not only in all parts of his body, but in his dress. . . . Probably the interpretation of odour has led to this belief. If the breath is the spirit or other-self, is not this invisible emanation which permeates a man's clothing and by which he may be traced also a part of his other self? "²

But inference from odour does not, any more than the idea of contagion, satisfy all the conditions. There is also, as already suggested, to be taken into account the general ideas derived from the specific idea of dress. A garment is an expression of personality, and, as such, its significance is enforced by its application to other personalities, while this application receives a concrete meaning and the general idea is concretely realized from the mere fact that the object expressive of personality possesses and may retain the material impress of the person. These ideas enter into many of the superstitious uses of dress. One or two types may be cited. The Kayans believe that to touch a woman's clothes would enervate them and make them unsuccessful in hunting and war.³ The Siamese consider it unlucky to pass under women's clothes hung out to dry.⁴ The Queensland natives would take off the skin of a slain enemy and cover a sick man with it, in the hope of curing him.⁵ In this and similar cases, as in the practice of blood-drinking,

¹ H. H. Ploss, *Das Kind* (Leipzig, 1876), i. 240.

² H. Spencer, *Principles of Sociology* (1876-1896), i. 336.

³ A. W. Nieuwenhuis, *Quer durch Borneo* (Leyden, 1904-1907), i. 350.

⁴ A. Bastian, *Die Voelker des oestlichen Asien* (Leipzig, 1866-1871), iii. 230.

⁵ L. Fison and A. W. Howitt, *Kamilaroi und Kurnai* (1880), p. 223.

merely the application of organic activity and strength is intended.

It is doubtful if cases like the following imply as much as they seem to do. The desire to have an article clean and new is irreducible, but upon it may be developed habits and beliefs of a mystical nature. The people of Nias, after buying clothes, scrub them carefully in order to rid them of all contagion of the original owners.¹

The irradiation of ideas of contact has remarkable power and extension, as is shown by beliefs concerning the dress of members of the sacred world. Such garments are impregnated with the *mana* of the wearer, as was Elijah's mantle. But, as pointed out before, metaphors like "impregnated" cannot always be elevated into reasons. The idea that "sanctity," for instance, may inhere in garments as an effluvium or a force is possibly a late explanation, and not the original reason for the practices and beliefs concerned. The Mikado's clothes, by reason of their "sanctity," caused pain and swellings if worn by other persons. Similarly, to avoid injuring others, his eating and drinking vessels were destroyed immediately after use.² The garments of a Maori chief would kill any man who wore them. In other words, the chief's *tapu*, inherent in them, had the power of destroying.³ In Fiji there was a special disease, *kana lama*, caused by wearing the clothes of a chief.⁴

The principles of ceremonial purity and defilement have produced some remarkable forms of dress and rules of toilette. Among the Mekeo of New Guinea,

¹ Nieuwenhuis-Rosenberg, "Verslag omtrent het Eiland Nias en deszelfs Bewoners," *Verhandelingen van het Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen* (1863), XXX. 26.

² E. Kaempfer, "History of Japan," in J. Pinkerton, *A General Collection of Voyages and Travels* (1808-1814), vii. 717.

³ R. Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 164.

⁴ L. Fison, quoted by Sir J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough* (3rd edition, 1911-1915, iii. 131).

a woman after childbirth must wear gloves made of coco-nut fibre when pouring water.¹ The Tinné or Déné girl during her first period wears a skin bonnet with fringes reaching to the breast, because the sight of her is dangerous to society.²

(d) *Personality and State*

For the psychology of dress a class of facts relating to murderers and menstruous women, and illustrated by the Eskimo theory of taboo, have an important significance.

It is a frequent rule that persons who have shed blood, or emit blood, shall indicate their state in a peculiar way. Thus, the homicide among the Northern Indians of America had to paint his mouth red before eating.³ The original intention was probably not protective, but merely an unconscious impulse to adapt the person to the particular state. The idea of protection may be superposed upon this. The Omaha murderer was not allowed to let his robe fly open; it was to be pulled close about his body, and kept tied at the neck, even in hot weather.⁴ Such cases, if their meaning is protective, are perhaps better explained as reactions to a vague and indeterminate impulse to concealment rather than as direct attempts to evade the ghost of the murderer's victim.

The smearing of the blood-shedder with blood as a means of adaptation to the state of bloodshed is exactly parallel with any investiture with a sacred dress, as a means of adaptation to a sacred state. The "dressing" is a frame to the picture. The Eskimo theory of taboo brings this out. Both personality in general, and particular states of a given personality,

¹ Guis, *Missions Catholiques* (1898), xxx. 119.

² A. G. Morice, "The Canadian Dénés," *Annual Archaeological Report [Ontario]* (1906 for 1905), p. 218.

³ S. Hearne, *A Journey from Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson Bay to the Northern Ocean* (1795), p. 204.

⁴ J. O. Dorsey, "Omaha Sociology," *Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology* (1884 for 1881-1882), iii. 369.

form round themselves an expression of their essence. The Eskimo hold that a man who has transgressed taboo appears to animals to be of a dark colour or surrounded by a vapour; for example, the hands of a menstrual woman appear to be red. This colour becomes attached not only to the soul of the agent, but to the souls of the animals with which he has to do; in fact, of everything with which he may establish contact. If a child is sick, the *angekok* removes a black attachment from its soul, caused perhaps by the child having taken oil-drippings from the lamp. A dead man's clothes may not be worn, for a hunter wearing them would appear dark and the seals would avoid him.¹

Behind all this is the instinct against incongruity, mal-adaptation. A hunter must not wear the dress of a dead man or of a mourner; equally a mourner must not wear the dress of a hunter. The passage from one state to the other, or the transgression of taboo, is not the primary notion. The spiritual garb, resulting from a particular state, is not originally the result of any transgression; it is an automatic effect of the state, a psychological echo of the adaptation, assimilation, or identification of the individual with his particular condition.

Again, it is believed by the Greenlanders that, if a whale fisher wears a dirty dress, or one contaminated by contact with a dead man, the whales will desert the fishing-grounds.² In such cases it is probable that there is originally no notion of contamination or contagion at all; there is merely the incongruity between the full-dress, and complimentary circumstances of the hunt,—the quarry being approached respectfully and regardfully,—and the undress slovenliness of dirty clothes or the ill-omened and tactless

¹ F. Boas, "The Eskimo of Baffin Land and Hudson Bay," *Bulletin of the American Museum of Natural History* (1901), xv., i. 119-126.

² D. Cranz, *The History of Greenland* (1820), i. 120.

reference to death contained in any connexion with a corpse.

The garment of a particular state must be discarded when that state is past. By this means and by bodily "cleansing" transition to the new state or to the normal is effected. The Hebrew high priest after offering the sin-offering had to wash himself and put off the garments he had worn.¹ Similarly the Greek worshipper after an expiation might not enter a city or his house until he had washed himself and his clothes.²

Such rules are of world-wide extension. The principle of contamination in its secondary and ordinary meaning cannot cover all the facts. The original meaning of "mixture," and conversely the original meaning of "purity," as an unmixed state, supply an adequate explanation, in the principle of a psychical (and, as expressed in action, a material) adaptation to state. In customs such as the following the original motive is obscure, but the secondary idea of removal of a dangerous effluvium is suggested. Among the Berbers of South Morocco, "persons who have been wrongly accused of a crime sometimes entirely undress themselves in the sainthouse, when going to swear. They believe that, if they do so, the saint will punish the accuser; and I conclude," observes Westermarck, who reports the custom, "that at the bottom of this belief there is a vague idea that the absence of all clothes will prevent the oath from clinging to themselves."³

Secondary also is the principle that sacred appurtenances may only be used once; when emptied of their force, they must be destroyed.⁴ Nor can we regard as primary the principle that change or re-

¹ Leviticus xvi. 23-24.

² Porphyry, *De abstinentia*, ii. 44.

³ E. Westermarck, *The Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas* (2nd edition, 1917), i. 59.

⁴ A. van Gennep, *Les rites de passage* (1909), p. 85.

moval of dress is a rite of separation from the previous state. The important thing is not the moment of transition (and there is no evidence that any danger is attached to this), but the state itself. Passage from one state to another is marked frequently by change of apparel, but it is unnecessary to labour the point of transition. It is clear that the principle of adaptation to state or circumstance has, as a corollary, the principle of change, which may be more or less emphasized. Thus, the Lapps strip themselves of the garments in which they have killed a bear,¹ just as after any sacred ceremony the participants put off their ceremonial appurtenances. The particular state is over and done with; therefore its exterior adaptation must likewise be removed. Ideas of removing the sacred and dangerous influence are probably secondary.

These considerations, in connexion with the principle that solemnity in dress must accompany solemnity of circumstance and function, may explain the following types of these customs. For the harvest festival the two officiating elders of the Nāgas wash carefully and put on new clothes.² The Greeks put on clean clothes before worship.³ Before officiating the Shintō priests of Japan put on clean garments.⁴ It is a precept of Islām that the clothes and person of a worshipper shall be clean.⁵ A Muhammadan "would remove any defiled garment before he commences his prayer, or otherwise abstain from praying altogether."⁶ In ancient Christian baptism the novices put off their garments, and clothed themselves in new white robes.⁷ At the consecration of a Catholic virgin the

¹ Sir J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough* (3rd edition, 1911-1915), iii. 221.

² T. C. Hodson, *The Nāga Tribes of Manipur* (1911), p. 172.

³ E. Westermarck, *op. cit.*, ii. 352, citing the authorities.

⁴ W. E. Griffis, *Religions of Japan* (1895), p. 85.

⁵ E. Sell, *Faith of Islam* (2nd edition, 1896), p. 257.

⁶ E. Westermarck, *op. cit.*, ii. 416.

⁷ A. van Gennep, *op. cit.*, p. 135.

novice puts off her ordinary clothes, and puts on the habit and the veil; also the ring on the finger—the ceremony being actually a marriage to Christ.¹ The putting away of the skin dress of the novitiate and the assumption of new clothes were part of the "ordination" of the ancient Brähman.²

Whether the new state is the extraordinary state of sacredness or the ordinary state of common life, adaptation to it equally involves change of assimilative costume, preceded by removal of that previously worn. In order to assume the crest of the *Lulem*, the Bear, the Carrier Indian took off all his clothes, and spent some days and nights in the woods. On his return he joined in the Bear Dance, in which he was dressed as a bear. During initiation to secret societies in the Congo States, the candidate is naked.³ In British Central Africa, boys during initiation wear bark-cloth. At the conclusion new clothes are put on. Entrance to the various gilds is marked by a change of costume. Girls after initiation put on new calico.⁴ When their initiation ceremonies were over, Kaffir boys were chased to the river, where they washed off the white clay with which their bodies had been painted. Everything about them was burned. They were smeared with the ordinary unguent and were given new karosses.⁵

Frazer has suggested that the practices of depilation, and painting the body white or red, at puberty,

¹ J. P. Migne, *Encyclopédie Théologique* (1844-1866), xvii.; Boissonet, *Dictionnaire des cérémonies et des sacrés* (1846), iii. coll. 539 ff.

² H. Oldenberg, *Die Religion des Veda* (Berlin, 1894), p. 350.

³ L. Frobenius, *Die Masken und Geheimbünde Afrikas* (Halle, 1898), pp. 69-70.

⁴ H. Stannus, "Notes on some Tribes of British Central Africa," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* (1910), xl. 296, 297.

⁵ J. Maclean, *A Compendium of Kafir Laws and Customs* (Mount Coke, 1858), p. 99.

are in view of the belief in re-birth.¹ The Kikuyu, for instance, hold that a boy is born again at circumcision, and he pretends so to be.² But this idea is *ex post facto*.

When her period is over, a woman puts on new clothes. This is the ordinance of the *Shāyast lā-Shāyast*, of the Mosaic and Hindu law, and of the vast majority of savage and barbarian customary social codes. Thus, the Kharwar woman after her period bathes and washes her clothes.³ The Thompson Indian girl has the special dress she wore during her seclusion at puberty burnt on her re-entry into society.⁴ At the end of the *hiri*, the annual trading expedition, which partakes of the nature of a solemn pilgrimage, the Koita of New Guinea bathes, anoints himself, and puts on a new *sihi*, loin-cloth. His wife, who has stayed at home, also bathes and puts on new garments.⁵

A sort of mechanical link between purification by lustration and the assumption of new clothes is made by anointing. After childbirth the Kaffir mother is anointed ceremonially with the ordinary fat and red clay.⁶ This is equivalent to the resumption of decent apparel.

New clothes express a new state or condition. There is an impulse to rhythmical change in human life, coinciding with later ideas of morality. The Incas, at a purificatory festival which was to banish all evil, shook their clothes, crying "Let the evils be gone!"⁷ In such cases the idea of newness, owing

¹ Sir J. G. Frazer, *Totemism and Exogamy* (1910), iv. 230.

² *Ibid.*, iv. 228, quoting A. C. Hollis.

³ W. Crooke, in *North Indian Notes and Queries* (1891), i. 67.

⁴ J. Teit, "The Thompson Indians of British Columbia," *Publications of the Jesup North Pacific Expedition* (1898-1900), i. 317.

⁵ C. G. Seligmann, *The Melanesians of British New Guinea* (Cambridge, 1910), p. 10. ⁶ J. Maclean, *op. cit.*, p. 94.

⁷ Sir J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, ix. 130.

to the contrast between the old state and the new and to the impulsive belief in change as producing good fortune, tends to predominate over the principle of adaptation to the new state. In other words, the important thing is not the succeeding state but the riddance of the old. At the Creek festival of new fruits, the *busk*, new clothes and new utensils were provided by each person; the old clothes were burned.¹ At the Tongan festival of first-fruits all were clad in new clothes.² The Hindus wear new clothes at the festival of the new year, *samvatsarādi*.³ The Chinese ceremony of "raising the head" is the putting on of special clothes for marriage. A suit of white body-clothes of linen is made for both bride and groom. Brand-new they are, and are worn during the marriage ceremonies, for on this occasion they themselves "become brand-new people." The suits are then put away, only to be worn again in the tomb.⁴ In Korea, on the 14th day of the first month, anyone entering upon "a critical year of his life" dresses an effigy of straw in his own clothes and casts it away. Fate is believed to look upon the individual in his new clothes as another man.⁵

Here the secondary principle of disguise intrudes. Ideas of disguise by change of dress have been developed in many cases. Thus, in the seventh month of pregnancy, a Ceramese woman is rubbed with dough of seven colours. A new ornamental *sarong* is placed on her. This the husband slices in two with a sword and immediately runs away. She is dressed seven times in seven colours.⁶ The Bulgarian,

¹ W. Bartram, *Travels through North and South Carolina, Georgia, East and West Florida* (Philadelphia, 1791), p. 507.

² W. Mariner, *An Account of the Natives of the Tonga Islands* (2nd edition, 1818), ii. 197.

³ J. E. Padfield, *The Hindu at Home* (Madras, 1896), p. 192.

⁴ J. J. M. de Groot, *The Religious System of China* (Leyden, 1892, etc.), i. 47. ⁵ W. E. Griffis, *Corea* (1882), p. 298.

⁶ A. S. Buddingh, "Gebruiken bij Javaansche Grooten," *Tijdschrift voor Néerland's Indie* (1840), III. ii. 241-242.

to cure scrofula, will creep naked through an arch of boughs, and then hang his clothes on a tree, donning other garments.¹ In Uganda a sick man is made to jump over a stick, and let his bark-cloth fall off. The priest takes the cloth and runs in the opposite direction.²

Often it is enough to follow the principle of the fantastic as a strong contrast to the previous state which has suffered misfortune. Thus, in South Guinea a sick woman is dressed in a fantastic garb, and her body is painted with streaks of red and white. She then stands in front of her hut brandishing a sword.³ The last detail is a later stratum. The Mosquito Indians believe that the devil (*Wulasha*) tries to seize the corpse. It is hurried to the grave by four men, who have disguised themselves with paint.⁴ A Siberian shaman will paint his face red when about to accompany a soul to the spirit-land, expressly to disguise himself from devils.⁵ The Tongans, when at war, changed their costume before every battle by way of disguising themselves.⁶ Similarly the king of Israel disguised himself at Ramoth-Gilead.⁷

Disguise may take the form of impersonation, and the agent may be a person or a thing. The people of Minahassa delude the evil spirit by placing on the sick man's bed a dummy dressed in his clothes.⁸ Abyssinian kings had a sort of small bodyguard who dressed exactly like their royal master. "So that the

¹ A. Strausz, *Die Bulgaren* (Leipzig, 1898), p. 414.

² J. Roscoe, quoted by Sir J. G. Frazer, *op. cit.*, xi. 181.

³ J. L. Wilson, *Western Africa* (1856), p. 28.

⁴ H. H. Bancroft, *The Native Races of the Pacific States of North America* (New York, 1875-1876), i. 744-745.

⁵ V. V. Radlov, *Aus Sibirien* (2nd edition, Leipzig, 1893), ii. 55.

⁶ C. Wilkes, *Narrative of the United States Exploring Expedition during the Years 1838-1842* (Philadelphia, 1845), iii. 10.

⁷ 1 Kings xxii. 30.

⁸ N. Graafland, *De Minahassa* (Rotterdam, 1869), i. 326.

enemy may not distinguish him" was the reason assigned.¹

The protective value of dress is often expressed merely as that of a covering. Thus, when the angel appeared to Muhammad, he hastened to his house, crying, "Cover me with cloth!" Then God spoke to him: "O thou, enwrapped in thy mantle, arise and warn!" From this point the prophet commenced his composition of the Koran.² A Hindu mother passing a haunted place draws her robe over her child. In old Bengal there was a prayer for the protection of children till they were dressed in clothes.³

In its sexual and supernatural uses alike the veil protects both the face or head from sight and the eyes from seeing the forbidden or dangerous object. To see and to be seen are often interchangeable, and often combined as media of dangerous influences. In early Arabia handsome men veiled their faces to preserve themselves from the evil eye.⁴ Here there is no doubt a combination of subjective and objective methods. The veiling of women and the consequent artificial modesty concerning the exposure of the face are a remarkable characteristic of Muslim social life, and illustrate the secondary habits induced by dress. Ceremonial veiling of a temporary nature is found in the case of puberty, marriage, and widowhood. The novice during initiation to the *Ko'tikili* of the Zuñi wears a veil, and is supposed to see nothing.⁵ Similar practices attend initiation to many forms of secret society. The veiling of the bride is more or less universal. A Muslim woman takes the veil, just as

¹ J. L. Krapf, *Travels, Researches, and Missionary Labours during an Eighteen Years' Residence in Eastern Africa* (1860), p. 454.

² E. Sell, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

³ *Bombay Gazetteer*, xviii. 441; H. T. Colebrooke, *Essays* (1858), i. 213.

⁴ J. Wellhausen, *Reste arabischen Heidentums* (2nd edition, Berlin, 1897), p. 196.

⁵ Mrs. M. C. Stevenson, "The Zuñi Indians," *Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology* (1904), xxiii. 103.

does a nun. Momentary veiling occurs in the presence of death and in approaching a deity. Socrates and Julius Cæsar veiling their faces at the moment of death typified the Greek and Italian national custom. To interpret, as van Gennep does, these latter cases as rites of passage, with the purpose of separating one's self from the profane world, is fanciful.¹ The habit is more probably a motor reaction to the impulse for concealment before an object of fear. The veil of the bride is a ritual concession to, and a material accentuation of, the sexual character of modesty, rather than a rite of separation from the previous state. To apply the idea of separation from the previous state to the habit of veiling at the moment of death is clearly impossible. In the case of many secret societies veiling is probably intended merely to accentuate the sense of mystery.

In connexion with marriage there are customs of stripping or forcible removal of dress. In some cases these seem to point to a diminution of personality, in others they are preparatory to the assumption of a new dress, often presented by the bridegroom. Among the Roro tribes of New Guinea a nubile girl is tatooed and wears ornaments every day. After marriage, for a few weeks she decorates herself every afternoon. She may not visit her father's village until after a ceremony in which she is stripped of all her finery.² The idea, no doubt, is to affirm her subjection to her father's family.

The exchange of presents of dress, a prevalent custom at marriage, may be extended. Thus, the Koita of New Guinea hold the *heni* ceremony when a first-born child is three weeks old. The infant is decked with various finery, and is carried by the mother, also dressed up, to her mother's house. Her husband follows her with an empty pot, a spear, a

¹ A. van Gennep, *op. cit.*, p. 241; also S. Reinach, *Cultes, mythes, et religions* (Paris, 1905-1912), i. 299-311.

² C. G. Seligmann, *op. cit.*, pp. 266, 270.

petticoat, and a firestick. After smoking and betel-chewing, the wife of the child's maternal uncle strips the ornaments and clothes from the mother and the child. These and the articles carried by the father become the property of the *rainmu* and the *wahia*, the grandfather and grandmother on the maternal side. A return present is given.¹

Customs which prescribe the wearing of best clothes or of rags illustrate the most important psychological result of the invention of dress. This is a secondary human character, the feeling for dress, and is one aspect (consisting in extension of self-consciousness) of the reaction to extension of personality. It is really distinct from the feeling for ornament and the impulse to protection, but is correlated with the more physical impulse to cleanliness, and the dermal and nervous refinement which dress has introduced into the human organism. Connected with the latter development are various reactions in the spheres of art and etiquette. Stanley Hall finds that of the three functions of clothes—protection, ornament, and Lotze's self-feeling—the second is by far the most conspicuous in childhood.² But the sense of personal dignity and physical pride is only learnt in childhood. Of the psychical resultants of dress this adult character is the most significant. As Lotze puts it, clothes extend the limits of self and enable the wearer to feel himself to the extremity of each garment. A precise analogy is found in the psychology of tools. Add the sexual factor, and "the mere presence or possession of the article [of clothing] gives the required sense of self-respect, of human dignity, of sexual desirability. Thus it is

¹ C. G. Seligmann, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

² G. S. Hall, "Some Aspects of the Early Sense of Self," *American Journal of Psychology* (1898), p. 366. See also, for the social psychology of dress, George van Ness Dearborn, *The Psychology of Clothing* (The Psychological Monographs, No. 112, Princeton, 1918). Mr. J. C. Flügel's important *The Psychology of Clothes* (1930) should also be consulted.

that to unclothe a person is to humiliate him; this was so even in Homeric times, for we may recall the threat of Ulysses to strip Thersites.¹

Similarly, to foul a person's garments is a secondarily direct insult. When the sense of well-being is at a maximum, fine dress is an expression of it and an adaptation to it. Also, on momentous occasions a man of any period will dress very carefully, unconsciously intending to affirm and emphasize his personality. Conversely, to express misery, the negation of well-being, or humility, a negative form of dress is employed; value, colour, and style are at a minimum. The diminution of personality is echoed by wearing rags, sackcloth, or colourless or torn or dirty clothes, which act as adaptations to the negative state. Momentary diminutions of personality can only be expressed by partial unclothing or by fouling or tearing the dress. In both cases the dress or its treatment has a reaction on the psychical state of the individual.

On these foundations luxury and superstition have erected a mass of fashions. Two typical cases follow. Great personages in Siam used to wear clothes of a different colour for each day of the week. As an example, white was worn on Sunday, yellow on Monday, green on Tuesday, red on Wednesday, blue on Thursday, black on Friday, violet on Saturday.²

The primary meaning of the dress next cited is not talismanic, but a suggestion of well-being. Its magical content is secondary, and it is therefore considered here particularly. The Chinese *siū i*, "the garment for a long life," is a long gown of valuable silk, blue or red-brown, with a lining of bright blue. It is embroidered all over with gold-thread characters, representing the word "longevity." "It purports, in the first place, to prolong the life of the owner, who

¹ H. H. Ellis, *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*, i. 40; *Iliad*, ii. 262.

² Mgr. Pallegoix, *Description du royaume Thai ou Siam* (Paris, 1854), i. 319.

therefore frequently wears it, especially on festive occasions, in order to allow the influences of longevity, created by the many characters wherewith it is decorated, to work their full effect upon his person. On the anniversary of his birth he will scarcely ever neglect doing so, it being generally acknowledged among the Chinese that it is extremely useful and necessary then to absorb a good amount of vital energy, in order to remain hale and healthy during the ensuing year. Friends and kinsmen who throng the house to take part in the festivities will then, as a rule, greatly admire the dress and tender their reiterated congratulations to the happy wearer, whose children have been so filial, and so blessed by fate as to have bestowed a present of such delicate and precious description." The longevity garment is generally the gift of children who are filial enough to wish their parent to live long. There is considerable ceremony about the presentation. The garment should be made if possible in a year which has an intercalary month; such a year naturally has an influence on length. In accordance with Chinese ideas about sympathy between ascendants and descendants, the garment also ensures long life to its wearer's posterity.¹

In hunting, as in war, the human impulse is to emphasize personality. This is more powerful than the impulse to protection, though the two may be combined. The Dayaks wear as war-dress a basket-work hat, *katapu*, and a jacket of skin or quilted cotton. The crown of the helmet is adorned with feathers or full plumes. The *gagong*, or war-jacket of skin, has the animal's face on the wearer's stomach and its back hanging over his shoulders. It is little defence, though the head is covered with a plate or shell to protect the pit of the stomach.²

The mere fact that in all periods social meetings

¹ J. J. M. de Groot, *op. cit.*, i. 61 ff.

² Low-Roth, "The Natives of Borneo," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute* (1893), xxii. 53.

are the occasion for the wearing of best clothes indicates the social significance of dress. Dress loses half its meaning except in relation to society. The principle of extension of personality refers to the individualistic aspect of dress; the principle of adaptation to state is its social side. The vaguely termed "festival" of lower cultures is expressive of mutual well-wishing and of common well-being. At festivals the Ainus dress in their best clothes. The statement applies to all peoples. The individualistic form of the social meeting is amphitryonic. As is the rule with all peoples, the Guiana Indian, "when expecting guests, grooms himself carefully and puts on his best dress and ornaments; these often, as in this case, consisting only of a narrow waist-cloth by way of dress and of a necklace and armlets of white beads by way of ornament."¹

A few types of festal dress may be cited from a variety which exceeds all other forms of human inventiveness—a fact which illustrates both man's physical pride and his tendency to shift its focus to an artificial and variable substitute. The Manipuri festal head-dress is remarkable. "A white turban is bound tightly round the head, and over the top and in front is wound round a *shumzil*, a horn-shaped construction of cane bound over with cloth or gold braid, and ending above in a loop and below in three flat loops which are concealed under the turban. The *shumzil* is over a foot high, and curves slightly backwards; from the loop at its end hangs an embroidered streamer. On each side of the head a plume made of peacocks' feathers and the tail feathers of the horn-bill are inserted in the turban. . . . The whole structure is bound together by a narrow band of red and white embroidery, wound round and round and tied under the chin, with ends hanging down nearly

¹ Sir E. F. Im Thurn, "Anthropological Uses of the Camera," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute* (1893), xxii. 190.

to the waist.”¹ On high days Tangkhul men wear a kilt, and the *luhup* head-dress adorned with toucan feathers and tresses of hair.² The Woolwa Indians wear on festal occasions coronets made of the curly head-feathers of the curassow, and on the arms, feathers of the macaw, or yellow tail-feathers of the *Ostinops montzuma*.³ The women wear great masses of beads round the neck, sometimes occupying the whole space from the bosom to the chin. A petticoat of bark-cloth extends below the knee; it is wrapped round the loins, and the end is tucked in over the hip. The exposed parts of the skin are dyed a deep vermillion, the colour being extracted from the pod of the *arnotto* shrub.⁴

The Ackawoi wear for festivals a dress made of the bright, greenish-yellow, young leaves of the Aeta palm (*Mauritia flexuosa*). The Macusi wear a head-dress of bright parrot and macaw feathers, a ruff of black curassow and white egret feathers, and a strip of waist-cloth, as a dancing dress.⁵ At the feasts of the dead, Quoireng men wear a “glory.” This consists of bands of yellow and red thread, $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide, bound round the head. In them are fixed rays of bamboo with feathers inserted, the structure being 18 inches in height.⁶

The negroes of Jamaica hold annually the so-called John Canoe festival. The chief element of this appears to be the dressing-up enjoyed by the participants. The dancers wear painted masks “with slits for the eyes and mouth, white cotton gloves and

¹ J. Shakespear, “Notes on the Iron Workers of Manipur and the Annual Festival in honour of the special Deity Khumlangba,” *Journal of the Anthropological Institute* (1910), xl. 353–354.

² T. C. Hodson, *The Nāga Tribes of Manipur* (1911), p. 22.

³ H. A. Wickham, “Notes on the Soumoo or Woolwa Indians,” *Journal of the Anthropological Institute* (1895), xxiv. 203.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 204.

⁵ Sir E. F. Im Thurn, *op. cit.*, xxii. 195.

⁶ T. C. Hodson, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

stockings and white shoes, short, brightly coloured cotton drawers, edged with lace, and a jacket of printed cotton (the favourite colour is a particularly bright rose pink), with a bustle behind and in front.”¹

A notable feature of the South Slav celebration of the festival of St. John is the costumes then worn by the people. Some wear “long, white frieze coats, with white or beautifully worked kerchiefs folded somewhat like those of Italian peasants, and a long white shirt that was often deep with finest openwork at the bottom, sometimes in points of colour, tassels, and paillettes.” Others put on “short brown coats of stiff, thick material, elaborately and boldly embroidered in thick circles of green, red, and blue.”²

The dance is a social language, a motor expression of individuality in society. As a rule, best clothes are worn. Various circumstances often impose different fashions. For ceremonial dancing the Vedda puts on the *hangala*, a white cloth tied round the waist. Formerly leaf-girdles were used.³ Probably such costumes are merely for the facilitation of movement. In other cases regard is paid to the dance as such. The female dancing dress of the Fulas is elaborate, made of velvet or ornamental cloth, sometimes decked with bells which sound in time to the music.⁴

Meetings of society in its magical or spiritual character are no less marked by fine clothes. The Koran says: “Wear your goodly apparel when ye repair to my mosque.”⁵ The injunction applies to all religions, with the limitation (due to the difference between well-wiling and well-being, and later to the distinction between worshippers and deity) that

¹ E. A. Clarke, “The John Canoe Festival in Jamaica,” *Folk-lore* (1927), xxxviii. 72.

² Mrs. N. Huxley Roller, “Notes on some South Slav Beliefs and Festivals,” *Folk-lore* (1926), xxxvii. 67, 68.

³ C. G. and B. Z. Seligmann, *The Veddas* (1911), p. 213.

⁴ G. F. Scott Elliot, “Some Notes on Native West African Customs,” *Journal of the Anthropological Institute* (1894), xxiii. 81.

⁵ Koran, *Sûra* vii. 29.

excess of luxury is forbidden or discouraged. Cleanliness of attire is regularly enjoined, originally, perhaps, for the avoidance not of defilement, material or supernatural, but of mixture of states.

Just as all sacrifice should be precious, so should a dress-wearing victim be well dressed. The human victim sacrificed by the Pawnees was dressed in the richest raiment.¹ The *meriah* of the Khonds was dressed in a new garment before the sacrifice, anointed, and adorned with flowers.² For scapegoats the case may be different. When the image of the god is clothed it necessarily wears the richest raiment (see below).

The connexion of fine dress with well-being, and the estimate of clothing as a necessary of existence,³ are combined in the Hebrew belief that Jahweh was the ultimate donor of food and raiment.⁴ The teaching of Christ against "taking thought" for raiment, illustrated by the natural dress of the lilies of the field,⁵ was a wise protest against extravagance in the cult of this secondary body, and a timely rehabilitation of the body itself, no less than of the higher claims of personality.

Diminution of personality is symbolized by various customs of removing part of the dress. In India a low-caste man passing through a high-caste street must take off shoes and turban.⁶ That the reason for such uncovering is not the assumption of an unprotected state, by removing a garment of defence, is shown by such a case as the following. All persons when interviewing Montezuma put off their usual costume and "appeared in plain coarse dresses and bare-footed."⁷ The modern European fashion of

¹ Sir J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, vii. 238.

² S. C. Macpherson, *Memorials of Service in India* (1865), p. 118. ³ See Isaiah iii. 7.

⁴ Genesis xxviii. 20-21.

⁵ Matthew vi. 25 ff.

⁶ J. Padfield, *The Hindu at Home* (Madras, 1896), p. 73.

⁷ E. J. Payne, *History of the New World called America* (Oxford, 1892-1899), ii. 495.

removing the hat is a salutation of respect of a similar order, and not a removal of defence.

A permanent inferiority of person or status is expressed by inferiority of dress. "In Flores the sons even of rich families are dressed like slaves at public feasts, so long as the father lives, as also at his funeral. This . . . is apparently the external sign of a strict *patria potestas*, which remains in force till the funeral; until then the son is the father's slave."¹ It is a very marked custom of the Mpongwe for the young to show deference to the old. "They must never come into the presence of aged persons or pass by their dwellings without taking off their hats, and assuming a crouching gait."²

An artificial assumption of humility may be employed to emphasize the succeeding magnificence, or to deprecate the ill-luck which may follow pride. For some days before marriage the bride and bridegroom among the Muslims of the N.W. Provinces wear dirty clothes.³ Such practices may soon take on the ideas connected with disguise and protection from the evil eye. Similar, though of more obscure origin, is the custom, found in old English coronation ceremonies, that the king shall appear in poor garments before he is invested with the royal robes. German peasants dress a child in mean clothes to protect it against the evil eye. In Egypt the children who are most beloved are the worst clad. A fine lady may often be seen in a magnificent dress, with a boy or girl, her own child, by her side, with its face smeared with dirt, and wearing clothes which look as if they had not been washed for months. The intention is to avoid attracting the evil eye. The method employed is not disguise, but humiliation, negation of well-being, either deprecatory or to escape notice.

¹ E. Westermarck, *The Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas* (2nd edition, 1917), i. 602, quoting von Martens.

² J. L. Wilson, *Western Africa* (1856), pp. 392-393.

³ W. Crooke, in *Panjab Notes and Queries* (1886), ii. 960.

The evil eye is stimulated by finery and splendour, and its constant emotion is envy.¹

Penance and asceticism often coincide in method. Sackcloth is in this connexion the analogue of fasting and humiliation. For penance, Manu prescribes clothes of cow-hair, with the wearer's own hair in braids.² Among the rules of penance in medieval Christendom was the wearing of dirty clothes.³ An ancient rule for Buddhist monks was that their dress should be made of rags taken from a dust-heap.⁴ Early Christian ascetics disdained clothes, and crawled abroad "like animals covered only by their matted hair."⁵ Hindu ascetics similarly practised nudity as the least of their mortifications, "until British law interposed to prevent the continuance of the nuisance."⁶

A curious question is raised by certain fashions of cleanliness in connexion with dress. Physical cleanliness is a habit which has undergone evolution, and the fact perhaps suffices as an explanation for the following cases. The ancient Huns and Mongols, and the modern Kalmuks are reported to avoid the washing of their clothes—in the last case, apparently, for religious reasons.⁷ The Sūdras of the Carnatic never leave off a suit of clothes when once it has been put on. It drops off as it rots. The custom is said to have been religiously observed, and persons transgressing it and found changing garments before the old set

¹ H. H. Ploss, *Das Kind* (Leipzig, 1876), i. 134; W. E. Lane, *An Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (1846), i. 60.

² *Sacred Books of the East* (1886), xxv. 449.

³ E. Westermarck, *op. cit.* ii. 356.

⁴ H. Kern, *Manual of Indian Buddhism* (Strassburg, 1896), p. 75.

⁵ W. E. Lecky, *History of European Morals* (1890), ii. 108.

⁶ Sir M. Monier-Williams, *Brāhmanism and Hinduism* (4th edition, 1891), p. 395.

⁷ K. F. Neumann, *Die Volker des südlichen Russlands* (Leipzig, 1847), p. 27; J. Georgi, *Russia* (1780-1783), iv. 37.

was thoroughly decayed were excluded from the caste.¹ Jenghiz Khan ordered clothes to be worn till they dropped off in tatters. The wearing of clothes in this way is recorded of several peoples. Cold climates encourage such habits.² "Poverty," says Westermarck, "is for obvious reasons a cause of uncleanliness; 'a starving vulture neglects to polish his feathers, and a famished dog has a ragged coat.'"³ Cleanliness, again, is frequently a class distinction. Among the Point Barrow Eskimo, as amongst many modern European nations, the poorer people are often careless about their clothes and persons, whereas "most of the wealthier people appear to take pride in being neatly clad."⁴ Peoples who are much addicted to bathing are not on that account necessarily cleanly in habits of toilet and dress. The Californian Indians are fond of bathing, but are very uncleanly about their lodges and their clothes.⁵ The case of the Australian native, who never takes off his girdle of hair, is rather different;⁶ the analogy here is the non-removal of such articles as rings. Thus, while her husband is alive no Masai woman dares to take off her ear-rings, which are part of the symbols of marriage.⁷

Ideas of ceremonial cleanliness have probably had an important collateral influence upon the evolution of habits of cleanliness. Some such idea as the avoid-

¹ Dubois-Beauchamp, *Hindu Manners, Customs, and Ceremonies* (Oxford, 1897), p. 20.

² E. Westermarck, *op. cit.*, ii. 349 ff.

³ *Ibid.*, *loc. cit.*, quoting B. St. John, *Village Life in Egypt* (1852), i. 187.

⁴ J. Murdoch, "Ethnological Results of the Point Barrow Expedition," *Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology* (1892 for 1887-1888), ix. 421; E. Westermarck, *op. cit.*, ii. 350.

⁵ S. Powers, *Tribes of California* (Washington, 1877), p. 403.

⁶ P. W. Basset-Smith, "The Aborigines of North-West Australia," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute* (1894), xxiii. 327.

⁷ A. C. Hollis, *The Masai* (Oxford, 1905), p. 283.

ance of mixture of condition and environment may account for the origin of ceremonial purity, whereas during the early stages of the evolution of dress there seems to be no *a priori* reason why clothes, as such, should be periodically cleaned. The case of the Sabæans illustrates the connexion between cleanliness of dress and of person. The candidate for the priestly office is instructed not to dirty himself; and he must change his dress daily.¹ Given the existence of a natural impulse to personal and other cleanliness, its foundation being similar to that of ceremonial purity—an unconscious preference for clearness and distinctness in objects, a preference for the thing itself in its essential, specific, and individual, or unmixed, purity of character—asceticism, when, as is often the case, encouraging uncleanness, is a biological perversion and a social danger. Early Christianity was largely tainted with this.² St. Jerome approves the observation of Paula, that “the purity of the body and its garments means the impurity of the soul.”³

The ritual and emotional removal or tearing of dress is apparently derived from several motives. The Hebrew widow repudiating the levirate takes off her sandal and spits on the ground.⁴ In van Gennep's terminology this is a rite of separation from the husband's family. Among the ancient Arabs, women when mourning not only uncovered the face and bosom, but also tore all their garments. The messenger who brought bad news tore his garments. A mother desiring to bring pressure to bear on her son took off her clothes. “A man to whom vengeance was forbidden showed his despair and disapproval . . . by raising his garment and covering his head with it, as was done in fulfilling natural necessities.”⁵ Among

¹ N. Siouffi, *Études sur la religion des Soubbas* (Paris, 1880), pp. 68-69.

² See H. H. Ellis, *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*, iv. ch. 4.

³ Ep. cviii. 713.

⁴ “Halizah,” *Jewish Encyclopædia*.

⁵ J. Wellhausen, *Reste arabischen Heidentums* (2nd edition, 1897), pp. 195-196.

the Chuwashes, Cheremiss, and Wotyaks the husband effects divorce by tearing his wife's veil.¹ Similar customs, especially the rending of the garments to express indignation or repudiation, were prevalent among the Hebrews. The British Columbian expresses indignation against a wrong by destroying a number of blankets, the native currency. His adversary is expected to destroy an equal number to satisfy honour and heal the quarrel.

The rending of garments is perhaps a development from the reflex impulse to destruction generated by anger, indignation, or despair. When it becomes symbolic it may take on the character of a rite of separation, the rending of the garment indicating the severance of a tie or the isolation of the person from calamity or injury. In the Hebrew custom the latter seems to be the prevailing meaning of the rite—a meaning which might naturally be superposed upon an original unconscious reaction to emotions of resentment or sorrow. Stripping, as an indignity or penance, is applied to any person. Thus when his guardian-spirit fails to please him, the Eskimo will strip it of its garments.²

(e) *Dress of the Dead*

Like other states, death is marked and solemnized by a change of dress. In modern civilization, the corpse, whether embalmed or not, is swathed or loosely wrapped in linen or cotton cloths, and covered with the garment, if any, most typical of the dead person's official position. In particular cases, customs like that of placing the busby on the coffin involve the idea that official dress is more than individual personality, a special covering representing specialized social functions, whereas lay garments represent generalized.

Among earlier peoples it is the general rule to

¹ J. Georgi, *op. cit.*, i. 42.

² L. M. Turner, "Ethnology of the Ungava District, Hudson Bay Territory," *Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology* (1894 for 1889-1890), xi. 194.

dress the dead person in his best clothes. Typical cases are the American Indians,¹ Burmans,² Tongkingese,³ Maoris,⁴ Greeks,⁵ and Chinese.⁶ Careful washing and scrupulous toilette are no less significant and prevalent parts of the more or less ceremonial investiture of the dead. Among the Tshi⁷ and Ewe⁸ peoples the dead body is washed, dressed in the richest clothes, and adorned. The Yorubas dress the corpse in the best raiment. The exposed parts of a woman's body are dyed red. The body is wrapped, not in clothes, but in grass mats.⁹ Among the Koita of New Guinea the dead man is washed, oiled, and painted; a new loin-cloth and ornaments are put on him.¹⁰ The Malays shroud the dead body in fine new *sarongs*, sometimes as many as seven.¹¹ The Greenlanders undress a man when at the point of death, and put his best clothes upon him.¹² This detail recurs in China. The Hindus wash, shave, and dress the corpse in rich garments.¹³

¹ H. R. Schoolcraft, *Historical and Statistical Information respecting the History, Condition, and Prospects of the Indian Tribes of the United States* (Philadelphia, 1851-1860), ii. 68; H. H. Bancroft, *The Native Races of the Pacific States of North America* (New York, 1875-1876), i. 86; J. F. Lafitau, *Moeurs des sauvages américains* (Paris, 1724), ii. 389.

² Shway Yoe [Sir J. G. Scott], *The Burman* (1896), ii. 338.

³ Sir J. G. Scott, *France and Tongking* (1885), p. 97.

⁴ R. Taylor, *Te ika a Maui* (2nd edition, 1870), p. 218.

⁵ *Folk-lore Journal* (1884), ii. 168-169.

⁶ Sir J. G. Frazer, "Certain Burial Customs as illustrative of the Primitive Theory of the Soul," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute* (1886), xv. 75, 86.

⁷ A. B. Ellis, *The Tshi-speaking Peoples of the Gold Coast of West Africa* (1887), p. 237.

⁸ *Id.*, *The Ewe-speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa* (1890), p. 157.

⁹ *Id.*, *The Yoruba-speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa* (1894), pp. 156, 158.

¹⁰ C. G. Seligmann, *The Melanesians of British New Guinea* (Cambridge, 1910), p. 159.

¹¹ W. W. Skeat, *Malay Magic* (1900), p. 397.

¹² D. Cranz, *The History of Greenland* (1820), p. 217.

¹³ Dubois-Beauchamp, *op. cit.*, p. 503.

According to Homer, the corpse was covered with a soft cloth, over which a white robe was placed.¹ The Greek dead were shrouded in the handsomest garments the family could afford; there was an idea of keeping them warm on the passage to Hades, and of preventing Cerberus from seeing them naked.² The modern Greeks dress the dead in best clothes, but these are rendered useless by being snipped with scissors or drenched with oil.³

The grave-clothes of a Chinese are arranged round his dying bed. His boots are by his feet, his hat by his head, and so on. He rejoices in his last moments of consciousness, "that he will be fashionably attired in the regions beyond the grave." It was the old custom to strip the man of his clothes just before expiring, and to put the new clothes on, if possible, before death actually occurred.⁴ The Chinese ritual of dressing the dead is most elaborate. The curious point is that the corpse is swathed almost as thickly as an Egyptian mummy, but in suits of clothes, not bands of cloth. A distinction is made between inner and outer garments, the former being specially prepared for wear in the grave, the latter being, as a rule, a person's best or favourite clothes. Five suits of garments are forbidden, because the number five is a synonym of evil.⁵ Nine and thirteen are usual numbers. Even numbers symbolize the *Yin* part of Nature, cold, darkness, and evil, they are therefore avoided; and odd numbers typifying the opposite blessings are used.⁶ Confucius was buried in eleven suits and one court dress; on his head was a *chang-fu* cap. But, in accordance with the ancient division of the dressing into three stages, the body-clothes, the "slighter" dressing, and the "full" dressing,⁷ the

¹ *Odyssey*, xxiv. 293.

² Lucian, *de Luctu*, 10.

³ *Folk-lore Journal* (1884), ii. 168-169.

⁴ J. J. M. de Groot, *The Religious System of China* (Leyden, 1892, etc.), i. 6.

⁵ *Ibid.*, i. 64.

⁶ *Ibid.*, i. 65.

⁷ *Ibid.*, i. 338-339.

eleven suits comprised the first stage only, and over them were the "slighter" and the "fuller" dressings.¹ The clothes are exhibited to those present before each suit is put on, and the very elaborate rules of the *Li-ki* about the dressing of the dead are followed.² Previously the best or favourite suit is placed round the dying man. Before being placed on the corpse, the clothes are put on the chief mourner. He is stripped, and stands on a tray resting on a chair, "so as not to pollute the earth"; he wears a large round hat, "so as not to pollute heaven." Then each garment is put upon him in its proper order and afterwards taken off and put on the corpse. In the case of a woman, the eldest son, as chief mourner, still has to put the clothes on.³ The *Li-ki* explains the custom by the analogy of a dutiful son testing a medicine before his father drinks it.⁴ As the dressing proceeds the mourners wail and "howl."⁵ Wide drawers, lined, for comfort, with silk, are first put on. Stockings and a jacket follow. An ordinary jacket of linen, cotton, or silk, and trousers of the same material come next. A second jacket or even a third—the more there are the more devotion is expressed—may be added. When the body-clothes have been put on, the outer suits follow. The long blue gown of the middle class is a common type. It overlaps to the right, and is buttoned at the side. Over this is a jacket with short sleeves, extending, that is, only to the finger-tips; it is the kind of jacket used in winter as an overcoat. A common skull-cap of silk or horse hair, ordinary shoes and stockings, complete the suit. The costly silk clothes used on festive occasions are preferred by those who possess them. They represent the true sacerdotal attire of the paterfamilias, as high priest of the family.⁶ These include an outer and an

¹ J. J. M. de Groot, *The Religious System of China* (Leyden, 1892, etc.), i. 339.

² *Ibid.*, i. 341.

⁵ *Ibid.*, i. 67.

³ *Ibid.*, i. 67-68.

⁶ *Ibid.*, i. 46 ff., 49.

⁴ *Ibid.*, i. 68.

inner cloak, neither having a collar; the sleeves of the inner cloak project, and are of a horse-hoof shape. The inner is dark blue; for summer wear, white or yellow; the outer is dark blue or brown. A sash is worn round the waist. The boots are of silk. The winter suit alone is used for the dead, even in summer. Women wear their best embroidered clothes, such as the official dress of mandarins' wives, which is the regular bridal costume. It includes a dragon petticoat of green silk, a dragon mantle of red silk, a mantilla of black silk, and boots of red silk. The bride's hood, or phoenix cap, is a quarter-globe of thin twined wire, covered with butterflies, leaves and flowers of thin gilt copper, and symbols of felicity, joy, wealth, and longevity. Great care is taken with the coiffure.¹

Such is the *tho phao*, attire of the dead. Women, as a rule, wear the "longevity garment," but men prefer the true "sacrificial" robes, the *tho phao*.² One prepares them, "the clothing laid out for old age," at about the age of fifty or sixty. They are preferably cut out and sewn by a very young woman, such a person being likely to live long, and part of her capacity to live "must surely pass into the clothes, and thus put off for many years the moment when they shall be required for use."³

If these clothes have ever been lent to a friend, not of one's own clan, they may not be used for their chief purpose. Another suit must be prepared. However it may happen, it is a curious fact that the grave-clothes are often cut carelessly, and merely pasted, not sewn.⁴ Quite poor people use cheap mats. It is probably Buddhist influence that forbids the use of leather. Metal buttons may not be used, because metal is supposed to injure the body during decomposition.⁵

¹ J. J. M. de Groot, *The Religious System of China* (Leyden, 1892, etc.), i. 51-54.

² *Ibid.*, i. 63.

⁴ *Ibid.*, i. 51.

³ *Ibid.*, i. 60.

⁵ *Ibid.*, i. 65-66.

The bandages of the mummy are a development (for a particular purpose) from the use of the ordinary garments of life. In ancient Egypt the gods were invoked to grant clothing to the dead. The bandaging of the mummy corresponds in its ritualism very much, for example, with the Chinese dressing of the corpse. For instance, a sorrowing husband, reproaching his wife for haunting him, says : "I have given clothes and bandages for thy burial. I have given to be made for thee many clothes." The application of the swathes was "a divine task." In funeral rituals there are the chapters "of putting on the white bandages," "of putting on the green," and "of the light red and dark red bandages." The quantity used was a "measure of the affection of the relatives."¹

As a type of simpler customs the following explains itself, and is significant for the whole theory of the subject. The Samoyeds dress the corpse in the clothes he was wearing at death, and wrap the whole in birch bark or deer skins.²

Rare cases occur where derogatory garments are applied. The Avestan horror of death and its defilement sufficiently explains the following rule. Zoroastrian law ordained "clothing which is useless; this is that in which they should carry a corpse." In the case of still useful clothing, which had been touched by a corpse, a very thorough and minute process of cleaning was applied.³

When preservatives are not applied to the grave-clothes, some peoples periodically renew them. The bodies of the Ccapac-Incas were preserved and clothed, new clothes being supplied as required.⁴ At stated periods the Malagasy open the tombs of their an-

¹ A. Macalister, "Notes on Egyptian Mummies," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute* (1894), xxiii. 103, 107, 111.

² Jackson-Montefiore, "Notes on the Samoyads of the Great Tundra," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute* (1895), xxiv. 406.

³ *Sacred Books of the East* (1880), 269.

⁴ E. J. Payne, *op. cit.*, ii. 520-521.

cestors, removing the rotten *lambas* and rolling the bones in new ones.¹

A simpler method is to place changes of raiment in the grave, just as other articles of use are there deposited. In Vedic times, clothing and ornaments were placed with the dead for their use in the life to come.² The Chinese place clothes and silk in the grave, besides the numerous suits in which the dead man is clothed.³ Clothing, according to Pahlavi texts, was to be put upon the sacred cake of the "righteous guardian spirit"—both for its use in the other world.⁴ The clothing and weapons deposited in the Kayan grave are of the highest value, no broken or damaged article being deemed worthy of a place.⁵ On the other hand, many peoples render such articles useless by cutting or breaking them before deposition; and a principle commonly occurs that in this way the souls of the articles are released (as is the soul from the broken body of the dead man), and are thus able to accompany him to the place of the departed.

There is naturally some doubt as to the condition of the soul in its super-terrestrial home. Thus the soul of the Mexican, at death, entered the new life naked;⁶ whereas the soul of the dead Iroquois wears "a beautiful mantle" when it departs towards the other world in the west.⁷ The ghost is believed by Africans to wear the white cloth in which the body was buried.⁸ But, as has been seen, the person in the life to come wears similar dress to what he wore on earth. There are refinements; Christian eschatology

¹ T. T. Matthews, *Thirty Years in Madagascar* (1904), p. 202.

² A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology* (Strassburg, 1897), p. 165.

³ J. J. M. de Groot, *op. cit.*, ii. 392, 399.

⁴ *Pahlavi Texts*, in *Sacred Books of the East*, v. 383.

⁵ C. Hose, "The Natives of Borneo," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute* (1894), xxiii. 165.

⁶ E. J. Payne, *op. cit.*, ii. 407.

⁷ J. N. B. Hewitt, "The Iroquoian Concept of the Soul," *Journal of American Folk-lore* (1895), viii. 107.

⁸ Ernest Crawley, *The Idea of the Soul* (1909), pp. 175, 179.

in its popular aspects is inclined to invest the blessed with fine raiment and crowns of gold.

As for the meaning behind these customs, there seems to be, as usual, a series of moral strata or psychological layers. Various emotions might be supposed to be in competition as soon as attention was directed to the dress of a man just dead. Other things being equal, and before ideas of contagion on the one hand and of a future life on the other had been developed, principles of property and feelings of sorrow would first come into play, together with the principle of dress as an adaptation to state. Thus the Samoyed type may be one of the earliest. The corpse retains the garments he wore at death. He is prepared for the new state by the protective (both of external and of internal direction) covering of bark or similar substance which takes the place of the coffin.

Sorrow and affection would make the stripping of the corpse an act impossible for relatives. As the various ideas relating to the state of the dead became clearer, regard would be had to the comfort of the dead. No less than the living they must have the two great necessaries, food and raiment. Naïve examples of the idea are numerous. For instance, the natives of New South Wales wrapped the corpse in a rug, for the expressed purpose of keeping the dead man warm.¹ In Voigtland peasants have been known to put an umbrella and goloshes in the coffin, as a protection against the rainy skies of the other world.²

Later still there would supervene the idea, of complex origin, that articles in the house of death must be, like the occupant, broken and soulless. One component of this idea is perhaps as early as any, namely, the realization that articles of value, permanently deposited in a place by no means secure, and practically

¹ J. Fraser, *The Aborigines of New South Wales* (Sydney, 1892), pp. 79-80.

² J. A. E. Köhler, *Volksbrauch im Voigtlande* (Leipzig, 1867), p. 441.

known to be unused, should be rendered useless, to avoid robbery and the attendant distressing results of exhumation.

With the custom of dressing the dead in his richest raiment, and in many suits, the problem becomes less simple. First of all, as soon as the social consciousness realizes that death is a social state, and therefore to be solemnized, a change of garb is necessary. What are significantly termed in various languages "the last offices" express this principle, as well as the feelings of sorrow and affection, and the desire to do honour to the dead, as for the last time. In such conditions it is inevitable that the best of everything should be accorded to him. But another factor perhaps is included in the complex psychosis, at least in the earlier stages. This is economic. In early culture, clothes are property. Just as a man's property is called in and realized at his death, so a similar process is universal in mankind. The dead man is still a member of society; and the most personal and most distinctive of his property fittingly remains with him—his personal attire. Equally fitting is it that this item should be of the best, as representing him in the last of his social functions. By a pathetic paradox he is arrayed in his best clothes, as if to assert his personality and to express it in its highest terms, for the last time, though actually that personality is no more.

It is not likely that the dressing in fine clothes to tempt the departing or absent soul to return has any reference in this connexion. The custom of using many suits of raiment, carried to logical absurdity by the Chinese, is one of those problems that elude all rationalism. There is the analogy of the mummy-swathings, which suggests that the suits may be intended as a protection; there is also an idea of placing on or with the corpse all his available assets. The custom of dressing the dead in their best clothes, as of placing food with them, has been explained by Frazer as originating "in the selfish but not unkindly

desire to induce the perturbed spirit to rest in the grave and not come plaguing the living for food and raiment."¹ But the intellectual atmosphere which the explanation assumes is far from primitive or even from early thought. It represents a late, and somewhat abnormal or excessive, development of spiritualistic belief uncontrolled by social custom or dogma, in fact, an anarchic period of individualistic spiritualist licence.

The dress of the dead seems to preserve only in two or three details the principle of adaptation to state. The reason, no doubt, is that affection and other emotions naturally repudiate the physical actuality of that state, and substitute a moral ideal. But the binding of the corpse, or of its limbs, with cords or ropes, and the later swathing with bandages, accentuate the fact that the body is motionless and the limbs quiescent. At a later stage there might intervene the notion that by these means the possibly dangerous activity of the ghost would be checked. But social habits do not originate from such clear-cut rationalistic motives.

Some sporadic customs have probably an original intention that is not dissimilar. The Koreans fasten blinkers over the eyes of the corpse.² Various objects, coins and the like, are placed on the eyes of the dead by various peoples. Such habits, no doubt, were in origin intended unconsciously to emphasize, to realize by accentuation, the sightless state of the dead. With this intention is combined the necessity—both from subjective reasons of vague fear of the staring eyes, and from the natural though sympathetic impulse to close them—of mechanically depressing the eyelids after death. Possibly the custom of placing a mask over the face of the dead has a connected

¹ Sir J. G. Frazer, "Certain Burial Customs as illustrative of the Primitive Theory of the Soul," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute* (1886), xv. 75.

² J. Ross, *History of Corea* (Paisley, 1879), p. 325.

origin, as supplying, so to speak, like the swathings of the mummy, a permanent dermal surface over that which is destined to decay. The ancient Aztecs,¹ the earliest Greek peoples,² the Aleuts,³ Shans,⁴ and Siamese,⁵ masked the faces of the dead, particularly of kings and chiefs. In some cases, as those of the Greeks and the Shans, the mask is of gold or silver.

(f) *Mourning Dress*

The social significance of dress is well brought out in mourning customs, among which it is the most prominent. The variations are innumerable, but the principles involved are fairly clear. A few types only can be mentioned here.

Among the Masai, as mourning, the wife puts off her ornaments, and the sons shave their heads.⁶ As mourning, the Andamanese smear themselves with clay,⁷ ancient and modern Egyptians throw mud on their heads.⁸ In China the near relatives wear a mourning dress of brown coarse sackcloth.⁹ As regards other clothes, white is the colour of mourning. The Kiñahs of Borneo "wear bark cloth round their caps (as we wear crape round our hats) to show they are in mourning."¹⁰ Among the Gogodara a man's

¹ H. H. Bancroft, *The Native Races of the Pacific States of North America* (New York, 1875-1876), i. 93, ii. 606.

² H. Schleimann, *Mycenæ* (1878), pp. 198, 219-223, 311-312.

³ O. Benndorf, *Antike Gesichtschelme und Sepulcralmasken* (Vienna, 1878), *passim*.

⁴ A. R. Colquhoun, *Amongst the Shans* (1885), p. 279.

⁵ Mgr. Pallegoix, *Description du royaume Thai ou Siam* (Paris, 1854), i. 247.

⁶ A. C. Hollis, *The Masai* (Oxford, 1905), p. 306.

⁷ E. H. Man, "The Aboriginal Inhabitants of the Andaman Islands," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute* (1883), xii. 143.

⁸ Herodotus, *History*, ii. 85; Sir J. G. Wilkinson, *Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians* (1878), iii. 442.

⁹ J. J. M. de Groot, *The Religious System of China* (Leyden, 1892, etc.), i. 13; J. Doolittle, *Social Life of the Chinese* (New York, 1867), i. 134.

¹⁰ Low-Roth, "The Natives of Borneo," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute* (1893), xxii. 37.

widow "wears an *atima*, or elongated netted cap and bodice combined, which covers the head and body to the waist. It is made for her by her sister or nearest blood female relative. Modified *atima*, in the form of skull-caps or netted bands to be worn around the bottom of *diba*, are made by female relatives of the deceased for his sons, brothers, and other blood male relatives. *Atima* are woven from two-ply string of twisted siniwa bark. A widower wears an *atima*, which covers the head and neck. On his arms above the biceps, on his legs below the knees, around his neck, so as partly to cover his back and chest, he wears tasselled ornaments made of the cortex of the *biani* tree. These symbols are called *mamaka*. Around his waist, and so as to reach almost to his knees, he wears a shirt made of the same material, which is called *bebe*. His children by the deceased woman, as well as her male relatives, wear the modified *atima* above described."¹ In other parts of New Guinea, women in mourning wear a net over the shoulders and breast. In some parts men wear netted vests; in others, "when in deep mourning, they envelop themselves with a very tight kind of wicker-work dress, extending from the neck to the knees in such a way that they are not able to walk well."² The Koita widow wears fragments of her dead husband's loin-cloth, locks of his hair and bits of his tools, as a necklace. She is painted black, and wears a petticoat reaching to the ankles. Over the upper body she has two netted vests, the outer ornamented with seeds and feathers. A network cap is on her head. This costume is worn for six months, after which she is relieved of her mourning by the *robu momomo* ceremony, and the petticoat is burnt. The widower is also painted black all

¹ A. P. Lyons, "Notes on the Gogodara Tribe of Western Papua," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* (1926), lvi. 342-343.

² J. Chalmers and W. W. Gill, *Work and Adventure in New Guinea* (1885), pp. 35, 130, 149.

over.¹ Among the Roros, a neighbouring people of New Guinea, bones of the dead are worn by the mourners. A dead man's jaw is often worn as a bracelet.²

The principle of adaptation in colour is well exemplified. The most frequent colours used are black, white, dark blue, and the natural colours of, as a rule, cheap and common fabrics. The mourning colour in Korea is that of raw hemp or string. For a year the mourner wears the well-known mourner's hat. Its shape is that of an enormous toadstool, and the face is completely hidden.³ Among the Dayaks of Borneo, white, "as being the plainest and most unpretending, is worn in mourning and during out-door labour; it is cheap and will wash."⁴ Dark blue is the commonest colour for ordinary wear. A white head-dress is often worn in mourning.⁵ Women wear as mourning a deep indigo blue *bidang* petticoat.⁶ Among the Tlingits, mourners blacken their faces, and cover their heads with ragged mats.⁷ Calabrian women put on a black veil at the moment when a death occurs. At sunset it is taken off.⁸ Roman women put on black *palla* after a funeral. Black clothes as mourning are the fashion in ancient Greece⁹ and Italy,¹⁰ modern Greece,¹¹ and modern Europe generally. White mourning is recorded for Korea,¹²

¹ C. G. Seligmann, *The Melanesians of British New Guinea* (Cambridge, 1910), pp. 162-166.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 719, 721.

³ H. S. Saunderson, "Notes on Corea and its People," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute* (1895), xxiv. 304, 306.

⁴ Brooke Low, *op. cit.*, xxii. 36-37. ⁵ *Ibid.*, xxii. 40.

⁶ F. Boas, *Fifth Report on the Tribes of N.W. Canada* (1889), p. 41.

⁷ V. Dorsa, *La Tradizione Greco-Latina negli usi e nelle credenze popolari della Calabria Citeriore* (Cosenza, 1884), p. 91.

⁸ Homer, *Iliad*, xxiv. 94; Xenophon, *Hellenica*, i. 798.

⁹ J. Marquandt, *Privateleben der Römer* (2nd edition, Leipzig, 1886), i. 346.

¹⁰ C. Wachsmuth, *Das alte Griechenland im neuen* (Bonn, 1864), p. 109.

¹¹ J. Ross, *History of Corea* (Paisley [1879]), p. 318.

Tongking, China,¹ Siam,² in Imperial Rome for women,³ and in various parts of modern Europe.⁴ In old England, white scarves, hatbands, and gloves were worn at the funerals of infants and the unmarried.⁵ At Singapore a white sash is worn, but apart from this there is no mourning costume in Malaysia.

Mourners among the Tshi people wear dark blue clothes, which they assume as soon as the burial is over.⁶ Among the Yorubas a dark blue head-cloth is worn.⁷ Among the Ewes of Dahomey blue baft is worn, or merely a blue thread is placed round the arm.⁸ This fashion is paralleled by the modern European custom of wearing a black band round the sleeve. In parts of Germany blue is worn as mourning by women⁹ and in ancient and modern Egypt a strip of blue is worn round the head by women at funerals.¹⁰ Widows on the Slave Coast wear black or dark blue.¹¹ Anne Boleyn wore yellow for Catherine of Aragon.¹² Guatemalan widowers dyed themselves yellow.¹³ Sophocles wore grey or dark blue clothes in

¹ Sir J. G. Scott, *France and Tongking* (1885), p. 98 (S. Baron, "Description of the Kingdom of Tonqueen," in J. Pinkerton, *A General Collection of Voyages and Travels* [1808-1814], ix. 698, describes it as ash-coloured).

² Mgr. Pallegoix, *op. cit.*, i. 246.

³ Plutarch, *Quæstiones Romanae*, xxvi.

⁴ J. A. E. Köhler, *op. cit.*, p. 257.

⁵ J. Brand, *Popular Antiquities* (3rd edition, 1870), ii. 283.

⁶ A. B. Ellis, *The Tshi-speaking Peoples of the Gold Coast of West Africa* (1887), pp. 240-241.

⁷ Id., *The Yoruba-speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa* (1894), p. 161.

⁸ Id., *The Ewe-speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa* (1890), p. 160.

⁹ C. L. Rochholz, *Deutscher Glaube und Branch* (Berlin, 1867), i. 198.

¹⁰ E. W. Lane, *An Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (1846), ii. 257.

¹¹ P. Bouche, *La Cite des Esclaves* (Paris, 1885), p. 218.

¹² J. Brand, *op. cit.*, ii. 283.

¹³ H. H. Bancroft, *The Native Races of the Pacific States of North America* (New York, 1875-1876), ii. 802.

mourning for Euripides.¹ Grey was the mourning colour of the Gambreiotai.²

Simultaneous with change of dress are changes of bodily appearance, especially of the coiffure. The practice of cutting the hair short as a sign of mourning is extremely common. On the other hand, some peoples allow the hair to grow long, as the ancient Egyptians,³ the Hindus,⁴ the Chinese,⁵ and the Jews.⁶

Mourning as a social state is pre-eminently a suspension of social life; society is avoided, work is discontinued, and the mourner generally is under a ban. The degrees of mourning depend on the degrees of nearness to the dead. The period of mourning is frequently synchronous with the state of death; that is to say, it ends when the corpse is thoroughly decomposed. Throughout early thought there runs the idea that a person is not absolutely dead until every fragment of the viscera has disappeared. At the end of the time the state of ordinary life is re-entered in the usual way. Thus, the Ewe people burn their mourning clothes and put on new raiment when mourning ends.⁷ A widow among the Koossas, at the end of her month of mourning, threw away her clothes, washed her whole body, and scratched it with stones.⁸ The last detail is probably merely an extraordinary method of purification. The period of taboo undergone by murderers among the Omahas might be needed by the kindred of the victim. The

¹ A. Westermann, *Biographi Graeci* (Brunswick, 1845),

P. 135.

² *Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum*, ii. 3562.

³ Herodotus, *History*, ii. 36.

⁴ S. C. Bose, *The Hindoos as they are* (Calcutta, 1881),

P. 254.

⁵ J. H. Gray, *China* (1878), i. 286.

⁶ J. Buxtorf, *Synagoga Judaica* (Bâle, 1661), p. 706.

⁷ A. B. Ellis, *The Ewe-speaking Peoples*, p. 160.

⁸ H. Lichtenstein, *Travels in Southern Africa* (1803-1806),

i. 259.

formula employed was, "It is enough. Begone, and walk among the crowd. Put on moccasins and wear a good robe."¹

The prevalent explanations of mourning dress are based on the fear of the ghost and of the contagion of death. Sir James Frazer has suggested that the painting of the body and the wearing of special costumes by mourners are attempts to disguise themselves so as to escape the notice of the ghost.² Professor Westermarck is of opinion that "the latter custom may also have originated in the idea that a mourner is more or less polluted for a certain period, and that therefore a dress worn by him then, being a seat of contagion, could not be used afterwards."³ But such customs originate in unconscious motivation. Of course, concealment may be aimed at, unconsciously. But several considerations place the theory of disguise out of court. Savage philosophies seldom hit on correct explanations; being *ex post facto*, they are out of touch with origins. But they do refer to present conscious motives, which again may not be the underlying primary reason. The motive of disguise may often be superposed on some original unconscious motive, but the following case shows that the opposite may exist. In some of the Central Australian tribes it is said that the object of painting the body of a mourner is to "render him or her more conspicuous, and so to allow the spirit to see that it is being properly mourned for."⁴ Again, the prevalent custom of wearing the clothes or the bones of the dead is an absolute negation of the principle of

¹ J. O. Dorsey, "Omaha Sociology," *Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology* (1884), iii. 369.

² Sir J. G. Frazer, "Certain Burial Customs as illustrative of the Primitive Theory of the Soul," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute* (1886), xv. 73.

³ E. Westermarck, *The Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas* (2nd edition, 1912-1917), ii. 545.

⁴ Spencer-Gillen, *The Native Tribes of Central Australia* (1899), p. 511.

concealment. On animistic theory these appurtenances should attract the ghost.

Sir James Frazer notes that the customs of blackening the face and of cutting the hair after a death are observed not only for friends but for slain foes, and suggests that in the latter case the explanation of their use as being a mark of sorrow cannot apply. They may therefore, he adds, be explained as intended to disguise the slayer from the angry ghost of the slain.¹ The practice of blackening the body with ashes, soot, and the like is found in America,² Africa,³ New Guinea,⁴ Samoa,⁵ and very generally throughout the world. The precise reason for the choice of this medium is obscure.

When spiritualism has once become a part of social belief, such views may enter into the complex of current motives without cancelling the deep-seated original motive of the unconscious mind. Mourning dress, for example, may take on the character of a spiritual armour, as a defence against the evil spirits who often act as a syndicate of death, removing and devouring the souls of the living. At a Chinese funeral the grave-diggers and coffin-bearers tie their shadows to themselves by tying a cloth round their waists.⁶ A Northern Indian murderer wraps himself up tightly. The Thompson Indian widow wears breeches of grass to prevent attempts at intercourse on the part of her husband's ghost.⁷

Similarly the principle of contagion may be super-

¹ Sir J. G. Frazer, *op. cit.*, xv. 99.

² J. Carver, *Travels through the Interior Parts of North America* (1781), p. 407; H. H. Bancroft, *op. cit.*, i. 86, 134, 173, 180, 206, 288, 370, ii. 618.

³ Sir H. H. Johnston, *The River Congo* (1884), p. 426.

⁴ Chalmers-Gill, *op. cit.*, pp. 36-37, 149, 266, 286.

⁵ G. Turner, *Samoa a Hundred Years and Long Before* (1884), p. 308.

⁶ J. J. M. de Groot, *op. cit.*, i. 94, 210-211.

⁷ J. Teit, "The Thompson Indians of British Columbia," *Publications of the Jesup North Pacific Expedition* (1898-1900), pp. 331 ff.

posed on the primary meaning of mourning costume. Maoris who had handled a corpse were tabooed, and threw away the special rags they had worn, lest they should contaminate others.¹ It is stated of the Greenlanders that, "if they have happened to touch a corpse, they immediately cast away the clothes they have then on; and for this reason they always put on their old clothes when they go to a burying. In this they agree with the Jews."² A Navaho who has touched a corpse takes off his clothes and bathes.³ Such cases fall into line with other extensive groups of ceremonial observances. For example, at an annual festival the Cherokees flung their old clothes into a river, "supposing then their own impurities to be removed." A Maori, before entering a sacred place, which would *tapu* him, took off his clothes. But the earliest peoples, like the Australians, actually cover themselves with, and otherwise assimilate, the contagion of death.

On the other hand, de Groot holds that mourning costume in China originated in the custom of sacrificing to the dead the clothes worn by the mourner. In the time of Confucius it was the custom for mourners to throw off their clothes while the corpse was being dressed.⁴ But this view cannot be seriously entertained.

There are several considerations to be adduced by way of leading up to a more probable explanation. The complex of emotions produced by the death of a near relative may be supposed to be in the primitive mind composed of awe, sorrow, and, to some extent, indignation. In later culture the chief com-

¹ Pakeha Maori [E. F. Maning], *Old New Zealand* (1884), pp. 104-114.

² H. Egede, *A Description of Greenland* (1745), p. 197.

³ J. Menard in H. C. Yarrow, "A Further Contribution to the Study of the Mortuary Customs of the North American Indians," *Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology* (1879-1880), i. 123.

⁴ J. J. M. de Groot, *op. cit.*, ii. 475-476.

ponent is sorrowful affection, and mourning costume is regarded as a respectful symbol of this feeling. In the next place, the dead and the living together form a special society intermediate between the world of existence and the world of nothingness.¹ Again, the principle of adaptation to state has to be taken into account. This particular social state calls for particular solemnization. Mourning customs (and, in particular, costumes), says Sir James Frazer, "are always as far as possible the reverse of those of ordinary life. Thus at a Roman funeral the sons of the deceased walked with their heads covered, the daughters with their heads uncovered, thus exactly reversing the ordinary usage, which was that women wore coverings on their heads while men did not. Plutarch, who notes this, observes that similarly in Greece men and women during a period of mourning exactly inverted their usual habits of wearing the hair—the ordinary practice of men being to cut it short, that of women to wear it long."² The Mpongwas are very fond of dress, but when in mourning a woman wears as few clothes as possible and a man none at all.³

This reversal of habit is better explained on the principles we have assumed than on the principle of disguise. Death is a violent break of social life; sympathetic adaptation to it necessitates an equally violent suspension or reversal of ordinary costume. Such adaptation coincides with sorrow and indignation on the one hand, and with diminution or negation of personality on the other. A number of customs, of which the following is a type, confirms this. When a death occurs, Tshi women tear their hair and rend their clothes.⁴ From this it is but a step to the

¹ A. van Gennep, *Les rites de passage* (1909), p. 211.

² Sir J. G. Frazer, *op. cit.*, xxv. 73.

³ P. B. Du Chaillu, *Exploration and Adventures in Equatorial Africa* (1861), p. 9; J. G. Wood, *Natural History of Man* (1868-1870), i. 586.

⁴ A. B. Ellis, *The Tshi-speaking Peoples of the Gold Coast of West Africa* (1887), p. 237.

assumption of torn or ragged clothes and a shorn coiffure. Sorrow and indignation prompt the mourner to tear and lacerate both his body and his external coverings; sympathy with the state so violently induced prompts him to deny or humiliate his personality; this motive is helped by sorrow. Absence of colour, as in the hue of black, or apparent absence, as in white, and variations of these, as dark blue or self-colour in fabrics, are material reflexes of this motive of self-negation, which also coincide with the symbolism of colour as light and life, and of absence of colour as darkness and death. A particular case is the adoption of an uncleanly habit. Dirty clothes, dirty skin, and unshaven face were the mourning characters of the Romans. The custom of blackening the face with ashes has perhaps the same meaning. In the primitive camp the most obvious medium for dirtying the person is, not the earth, but the ashes of the camp-fire, which with water form, as does coal-dust in coal-countries, a dye as well as a defilement.

A paradox similar to one already noted is the result of this adaptation to state; and sorrow, and with it an equally praiseworthy intention to honour the dead, are the feelings which produce it. The dead man is dressed in his best, arrayed like Solomon in all his glory; for the last time his personality is augmented to superhumanity, while his kin temporarily assimilate themselves to his actual state, socially substitute themselves for him, and practically negate and cancel their living personality and abrogate their social functions.

IV

BIRTHDAYS AND THE DAY OF BIRTH

THE custom of commemorating the day of birth is connected, in its form, with the reckoning of time, and, in its content, with certain primitive religious principles. It is the most conspicuous example of commemorative ritual. Its essence is the repetition of the event commemorated. As culture develops, this primary meaning is obscured by various accidents.

In the lower culture, what is reported of the Congo tribes applies generally; we are told of these that "no record is kept of birth or age."¹ The Hupas of California take no account of the lapse of time, and consider it a ridiculous superfluity to keep a reckoning of age. They guess at a man's years by examination of the teeth. One will say, "I have good teeth yet." The only epochs noted are those of babyhood, boyhood or girlhood, youth, manhood or womanhood, the state of married man or woman, and that of old man or old woman.² The Omahas have a superstitious objection to counting, and therefore never note a person's age.³

The earliest lunar reckoning produced the seven-day week, the lunar month, and the lunar year, thus providing machinery for the expression of any ideas involving repetition of events. Parallel with these

¹ Herbert Ward, "Ethnographical Notes relating to the Congo Tribes," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute* (London, 1895), xxiv. 291.

² S. Powers, *Tribes of California* (Washington, 1877), pp. 76-77.

³ Edwin James, *Account of an Expedition from Pittsburgh to the Rocky Mountains, performed in the years 1819 and '20, under the Command of S. H. Long* (Philadelphia, 1923), i. 214, 235.

dates, and of earlier origin, are seasoned epochs, marked by changes in vegetation, and also the epochs of human growth, as noted above.

1. *The Day of Birth*

The day of birth itself may first be considered. At an early stage of chronology the influence of ideas of luck is brought to bear upon dates. Every people has its own list of ominous objects and circumstances. In highly developed popular religions the result is a dualism affecting the whole life of man. Of the Cambodians we read that the idea of luck dominates their whole existence.¹ The religion of the Baganda is described as a religion of luck.² Among the Tshi people of West Africa each person has his lucky and unlucky days.³ In the week of the Asabas of the Niger the days for marketing, for work, and for rest vary for each individual according to the particular *ju-ju* decided for him by the medicine-man.⁴

As the circumstances attending the moment of birth are auspicious or inauspicious, so are those attending the day. Any object or circumstance distinguishing it may affect the destiny of the child. When days are marked, they acquire permanent or varying characteristics which automatically influence the event. The Malagasy, who possess an elaborate doctrine of fatalism (*vintana*), mark a certain number of days in each month as lucky or unlucky. The *vava*, or first days, of some months are especially disastrous to children then born, in some cases to the offspring of the people generally, in others to those of the royal

¹ Étienne Aymonier, *Le Cambodge* (Paris, 1900-1904), i. 53.

² J. Roscoe, "Further Notes on the Manners and Customs of the Baganda," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute* (London, 1902), xxxii. 72.

³ Sir A. B. Ellis, *The Tshi-speaking Peoples of the Gold Coast of West Africa* (London, 1887), p. 220.

⁴ J. Parkinson, "Note on the Asaba People (Ibos) of the Niger," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute* (London, 1906), xxxvi. 317.

family. A child born on an unlucky day, and dying young, is said to have "too strong a *vintana*." Formerly, children born on unlucky days were put to death by being buried alive. In modern times this infanticide is commuted to an ordeal, offering, or "expiatory bath," the water being buried instead of the child. In one clan of the Sakalavas all children born on a Tuesday were put to death. In the Bora tribe a child was put to death if born on a day which was unlucky to both father and mother; if the day was unlucky for one parent only, the child's life was spared. In the Tanale tribe one particular month was peculiarly unlucky for birth.¹

With the rise of astrology comes the development of the horoscope and similar forms of augury. In origin such practices are a species of sympathetic magic; the intention is to influence events, or to assist nature, and the method employed is the rehearsal or artificial previous reproduction of the desired result. The Central Americans possessed an elaborate code of "signs of the day," applying to each day of each cycle of twenty days, the *cempohualli*, of which the year was a multiple. Horoscopes were prepared from these signs for the day and hour of birth. Every Mexican bore through life, as a species of personal name, the sign of his birthday.² The Burmese predict a man's character and destiny according to the day of the week on which he is born and the constellation which rules it. The name of the child must begin with one of the letters belonging to the birthday.³ The Asabas of the

¹ L. Dahle, "Sikidy and Vintana: Half-hours with Malagasy Diviners," *The Antananarivo Annual* (Antananarivo, 1888), vol. iii., No. xii., p. 460; James Sibree, *Madagascar and its People* (London, 1870), pp. 279 *et seq.*

² F. Bernardino de Sahagun, *Historia general de las cosas de Nueva España* (Mexico, 1829-1830), pp. 239 *et seq.*; E. J. Payne, *History of the New World called America* (Oxford, 1892), ii. 325 *et seq.*; H. H. Bancroft, *The Native Races of the Pacific States of North America* (New York, 1875-1876), ii. 271.

³ Shway Yoe [Sir J. G. Scott], *The Burman* (London, 1882), i. 4, 6.

Niger often name a child after the day of its birth.¹ In China the hour and the day of birth are regarded as being very important. A child born between the hours of 9 and 11 will have a hard lot at first, but finally great riches.² The Hindus possess an elaborate astrological system of nativities connected with lucky and unlucky days.³ In Madagascar nativities are drawn up from the position not of the stars, but of the moon. This method is earlier; later cultures prefer the star of nativity. The Tshi peoples name children after the day of the week.⁴ The Muhammadanized Swahili consider it lucky to be born on Friday, the Muhammadan festival. Children then born are named "son" or "daughter of Friday."⁵ In German folk-lore Sunday is lucky as a birthday, particularly the Sunday of the new moon. This idea is connected with growth. "Sunday children" are supposed to be able to see spirits, or to see in the dark.⁶

2. *The Birthday Anniversary*

The principle of repeating an event after its occurrence is an inversion of sympathetic magic. Whereas in the ordinary form of magic the coming event is influenced and ensured by previous rehearsal, in this inverted form it is reproduced in order to repeat the original advantages and to effect their continuance. The idea is naturally suggested by the recurrence of

¹ J. Parkinson, "Note on the Asaba People (Ibos) of the Niger," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute* (London, 1906), xxxvi. 317.

² N. B. Dennys, *The Folk-Lore of China* (London, 1876), p. 8.

³ J. A. Dubois, *Hindu Manners, Customs, and Ceremonies*, (Oxford, 1899), ii. 382 *et seq.*; Sir M. Monier-Williams, *Brāhmanism and Hindūism* ³ (London, 1887), pp. 372 *et seq.*

⁴ Sir A. B. Ellis, *The Tshi-speaking Peoples of the Gold Coast of West Africa* (London, 1887), p. 220.

⁵ C. Veltén, *Sitten und Gebräuche der Suaheli* (Göttingen, 1903), p. 13; James Sibree, *Madagascar and its People* (London, 1870), pp. 279 *et seq.*

⁶ H. H. Ploss, *Das Kind* ³ (Leipzig, 1911-1912), ii. 88, 89.

the same external or chronological conditions. These were closely bound up with the original event, and are therefore supposed to influence it. They are further supposed to carry it with them, and therefore require its repetition. The intention varies as the event. In the case of the repetition of birth the intention is a renewal of the life acquired by the original birth. Such ideas are illustrated by the general custom of celebrating the renewal of the year. The ritual is designed to renew not only the life of nature, but also the life of men, and at the same time to discard the old life, now regarded as decay and death. The seasonal changes of growth, connected early with the phases of the moon and the path of the sun, naturally fostered such ideas. As individualism developed they were applied to the life of each man. But the important point for the earlier periods is that these annual renewals of nature and of life in general practically amounted to universal or social birthdays.

To illustrate the first of these points, we may instance the Hindu festival *samvatsarādi*, which celebrates the beginning of the year. "The chief features of the day are the reading of the new almanac and hearing the forecast of the events of the New Year. New clothes also are worn when procurable, and the food partaken of during the day is, as far as possible, composed of new materials, *i.e.* new grain, pulses, and such like, for this is a feast of ingathering. One dish, which must be partaken of by all who wish for good luck during the year, is a conserve composed of sugar, tamarind, and the flowers of the *neem* or *margosa* tree (*Melia Azadirachta*), which is then in full flower. The bitter taste of this is not much relished as a rule; but it is necessary that at least a small portion of the dish should be eaten. This seems to be analogous to the English idea that it is necessary to eat mince-pie at Christmas or at the New Year."¹

In the next place, such festivals, surviving as they

¹ J. E. Padfield, *The Hindu at Home* (Madras, 1908), p. 165.

do into the highest stages of evolution, are in the early stages universal birthdays. The Malagasy custom is significant. In the lunar year of Madagascar, time is popularly reckoned by the annual great feast *fandroana*. Remarkable longevity is denoted by the phrase that a man has seen three *fandroanas* at the same season of the year. Thus he might see it in spring at the age of 7, again when 40, and again when 73. We are expressly informed that a man's age is reckoned not by his years, but by the *fandroana*.¹

The Japanese supply an instructive case of compromise between the social and the individual birthday. The first of January, the commencement of the New Year, "may be considered the universal birthday, for they do not wait till the actual anniversary of birth has come round to call a person a year older, but date the addition to his age from the New Year. The 61st birthday is the only one about which much fuss is made. This is because the old man or woman, having lived through one revolution of the sexagenary cycle then begins a second round, which is in itself an extraordinary event, for the Japanese reckon youth to last from birth to the age of 32, middle age from 32 to 40, and old age from 40 to 60. A child is born in December, 1901. By January, 1902, they talk of the child as being two years old, because it has lived through a part of two separate years."²

In the Chinese religion of piety we find a remarkably explicit illustration of the principle of the renewal of life on the anniversary of birth. "The birthday celebration is a peculiar institution," though not attended with much *éclat* till after the age of 15. Each person has an annual festival, and every tenth year after reaching 50 an extraordinary celebration. Especially honoured is the 61st birthday. The Emperor on

¹ W. Ellis, *History of Madagascar* (London, 1838), i. 447-448.

² B. H. Chamberlain, *Things Japanese* ⁴ (London, 1902), p. 62.

his birthday is supposed to acquire 10,000 "longevities." The courts of justice are closed, and a general amnesty is proclaimed. The ordinary person on his birthday receives "longevity presents," and his friends wish him long life. With the express purpose of prolonging life, a dish of vermicelli in remarkably long strips is eaten. Of particular importance is the "longevity garment." This is a handsome robe, embroidered in gold characters with the word "longevity." It serves at death as a man's shroud. It is generally a present from the children, and is given to the parent on his birthday. He wears it then, and on all festive occasions, in order to acquire long life, "it being generally acknowledged among the Chinese that it is extremely useful and necessary on the birthday to absorb a good amount of vital energy in order to remain hale and healthy during the ensuing year."¹

The Koreans celebrate the 61st birthday in the Chinese fashion. On ordinary birthdays new clothes are worn, and a feast is prepared for friends of the family.² The Burmese offer on their birthdays, celebrated weekly, candles representing the animals connected with the day of the week. The offering is an act of worship at the pagoda.³

The Central Americans celebrated birthdays with a feast given to the friends of the family. Presents were offered them on their departure.⁴

Among the Tshi natives of West Africa, a man's birthday is sacred to his *kra*, or "indwelling spirit." If a man is rich, he kills a sheep, if poor, a fowl, and prepares a feast. In the morning, when he washes, he provides himself with an egg, and some new fibre

¹ J. Doolittle, *Social Life of the Chinese* (New York, 1867), ii. 217 *et seq.*; J. J. M. de Groot, *The Religious System of China* (Leyden, 1892, *etc.*), i. 61-62.

² W. E. Griffis, *Corea* (London, 1882), p. 295.

³ Shway Yoe [Sir J. G. Scott], *The Burman* (London, 1882), i. 6.

⁴ H. H. Bancroft, *The Native Races of the Pacific States of North America* (New York, 1875-1876), ii. 283.

of the kind used as a sponge. He then stands before the calabash containing the water, and addresses his *kra*, asking for its protection and assistance during the coming year, as he is about to worship it, and keep that day sacred to it. He then breaks the egg into the calabash, and washes himself with the fluid; after this he puts white clay on his face, and puts on a white cloth. Members of the higher classes, kings and chiefs, keep sacred to the *kra* the day of the week on which they were born. Thus Kwoffi Kari Kari, having been born on a Friday, made it a law that no blood should be shed on that day.¹

The ancient Persians celebrated birthdays.² In ancient Egypt the birthdays of the kings "were celebrated with great pomp. They were looked upon as holy; no business was done upon them, and all classes indulged in the festivities suitable to the occasion. Every Egyptian attached much importance to the day, and even to the hour, of his birth; and it is probable that, as in Persia, each individual kept his birthday with great rejoicings; welcoming his friends with all the amusements of society and a more than usual profusion of the delicacies of the table."³

In modern Persia the birthdays of Muhammad and 'Alī, as in Islām generally, are duly honoured. For ordinary persons, however, the New Year's Feast is the only real festival.⁴ Among the modern Jews, the 13th birthday of a boy is celebrated as a family feast, this date being his religious majority.⁵

The preceding accounts introduce some secondary principles. The idea, inseparable from festivals, of holiday or rest, combines with the wish to avoid con-

¹ Sir A. B. Ellis, *The Tshi-speaking Peoples of the Gold Coast of West Africa* (London, 1887), p. 156.

² Herodotus, *History*, i. 133, ix. 110.

³ Sir J. G. Wilkinson, *The Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians* (London, 1878), iii. 368.

⁴ J. E. Polak, *Persien* (Leipzig, 1865), i. 338.

⁵ S. Roubin, "Birthday," *The Jewish Encyclopedia* (New York and London, 1925), iii. 221.

suming energy and vitality, and to assimilate the same by means of food and drink. A further principle is that of a propitious commencement of an epoch as influencing the whole. At a late stage such ideas are obscured, and an ethical principle arises. This is, in Western culture, faintly suggested by the phrase, "turning over a new leaf" at the New Year or on the birthday. In Catholicism, it is more marked in combination with the birthday of the individual's patron saint. In early Christianity each anniversary was a step towards the new life commencing at death.

The idea of renewal, as we saw, is in the early stages emphasized by the weekly phases of the moon. Thus we get the principle of the octave. One of its earliest applications is the celebration of the seventh day after birth, on which, among various peoples, the name is given or some ritual operation is performed. The principle of the octave is actually applied at times to produce a weekly birthday. This has been instanced in West Africa and Burma. A good many recorded birthdays are probably not annual, but weekly or monthly. The ancient Syrians celebrated a monthly birthday.¹

[These considerations lead up to some peculiarities of reckoning or commemoration which have influenced the custom.] The Apache father makes a note of each moon that follows the birth of a child. A large mark is made for the tenth month.² The Mayas celebrated as the birthdays of their children the first step taken, the first word spoken, and the first thing made.³ The Ovaherero reckon a man's age from the time of his circumcision, not counting the previous period. A man is called after the *otyiondo* of his circumcision. Those circumcised at the same time are *omakura*, "persons

¹ ² Maccabees, vi. 7.

² A. Hrdlicka, "Notes on the San Carlos Apache," *American Anthropologist* (Lancaster, Pa., 1905), n.s. vii. 490.

³ H. H. Bancroft, *The Native Races of the Pacific States of North America* (New York, 1875-1876), ii. 662.

of the same age.”¹ Such methods of reckoning age are convenient for the savage, who has little use for any more accurate reckoning. Other such epochs, which at a certain stage are the only “birthdays,” are weaning, initiation, and marriage. The Baganda reckon a man’s age by the reigns of the chiefs. “It was in the reign of so and so that I was born.”²

In the lower culture names are curiously parallel and interchangeable, so to say, with dates. The Central Australians have each a name denoting age in relation to others, but have no annual reckoning. The Maori had one name given at birth, a second at puberty, a third on his father’s death, and others whenever he performed some achievement.³ An Aht will change his name perhaps ten times in ten years, and celebrate the event each time with a feast.⁴ In connexion with change of name there is the idea of renewal.

An early application of the principle of commemoration is the “feast of the dead.” All the ideas connected with the spirits of the departed find expression here. In early religion these celebrations are as frequent and as important as any annual festival. In Oajaca great ceremonial attended the anniversary of the birth of great lords after their death. The belief was that the soul wandered about for many years before entering bliss, and visited its friends on earth once a year.⁵ The Hindus observe the new moon of the month, *Bhādrapada* (September–October), in honour of the dead. On this day the head of a family must perform prescribed ceremonies for the preceding three

¹ G. Viehe, “Some Customs of the Ovaherero,” *Folk-lore Journal* (Cape Town, 1879), i. 44.

² J. Roscoe, “Further Notes on the Manners and Customs of the Baganda,” *Journal of the Anthropological Institute* (London, 1902), xxxii. 72.

³ R. Taylor, *Te Ika a Manu* (London, 1870), p. 156.

⁴ G. M. Sproat, *Scenes and Studies of Savage Life* (London, 1868), p. 264.

⁵ J. E. Padfield, *The Hindu at Home* (Madras, 1908), pp. 165, 217, 225.

generations. The celebration is for such of the dead as may not have received the usual rites of sepulture. The fact shows, by negation, that the commemoration is the repetition of the event. The annual *śrāddhas* are well known. Their object is to "assist the departed spirit in the various experiences it will have to pass through. At the same time, the one who duly performs these rites and ceremonies thereby lays up merit for himself and his family, which merit will be duly carried to the credit of his account hereafter." One *śrāddha* is to provide the spirit with an "intermediate body." Another indicates the union of the dead with his immediate ancestors. The monthly *śrāddhas* commence on the thirtieth day after death. An annual ceremony is performed on the anniversary of the death.¹

A slight shifting of the point of view will show the parallelism between such practices as the Hindu and the early Christian principle that the birthday of the martyr was the day on which he died. The deathday of the faithful was regarded as their birth into a new life. The "natale" *par excellence* was the day of death. It was a nativity to a glorious crown in the kingdom of heaven. Tertullian observes that St. Paul was born again by a new nativity at Rome because he suffered martyrdom there. Such *natalia* were contrasted with "natural birthdays," as spiritual in opposition to worldly. The birthdays of martyrs, celebrated at the grave or monument, had a profound influence on the development of ecclesiastical institutions. The celebration was a service, at which the Communion was received. The ethical principle involved was imitation of the martyr, repetition in others of his life and death. The *fasti* of martyrs were gradually compiled, and churches were erected over their bones, the bones sometimes being replaced under the altar.²

¹ J. E. Padfield, *The Hindu at Home* (Madras, 1908), pp. 165, 217, 225.

² J. Bingham, *Origines Ecclesiastice* (London, 1838-1840), vii. 340 *et seq.*, 350 *et seq.*, 422.

The festivals of gods are frequently their birthdays. Thus the Hindu festival *Śrīrāmājayantī* celebrates the birthday of Rāma, the seventh incarnation of Vishnu. The image of the god is adorned and carried in procession. Pilgrimage is made to the temple. *Kṛṣṇa-jayantī* is the birthday of Krishna, and is one of the most popular of the annual festivals. The *Bhāgavata* describing the life of the god is read on that day. *Vīṇāyakachaturthī* is the birthday festival of Ganesa. Every house sets up an image of the god, before which lights are placed. A *mantra* of consecration, *pratiṣṭā*, is pronounced, on which the spirit of the god enters the image. In such acts we see a ritual re-creation of the divinity, a repetition of his birth. At this feast artisans worship their tools, and students their books, placing them before the image. Ganeśa is the god who is invoked in all undertakings, and who helps man on his way.

In Christianity the birthday of Christ is only less important than the Passion and the Resurrection. Even here the social aspect of religion is prominent, and, by a coincidence, the date finally decided upon is that celebrated in paganism as the annual birthday of the sun, just as the weekly day of the sun, the Christian Sunday, was the weekly birthday of the Solar Deity, and in Hebrew mythology the first day of Creation.

